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OR,
The Prisoner of the Weird Isles.

A Story of the Lost Group.

BY EDWARD L. WHEELER,
AUTHOR OF "DEADWOOD DICK" NOVELS, "SIERRA
SAM" NOVELS, "ROSEBUD ROB" NOVELS,
ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A STRANGE MEETING AND A STRANGE MESSAGE.

"SAY, boss, fo' the lub of goodness, kyarn yo'
give a poor fellow 'nough to buy a meal with, fo'
I'm next doah to starvation. Ef it's only a few
coppers, sah, so I kin buy a cracker o' so, I'll be
deap lot grateful, sart'in shore!"

The location was the city of San Francisco,

FAR AHEAD, IN THE LESSENING SUNLIGHT, LAY THE HULK OF A STRANDED VESSEL.

one sunny February day, and the locale was at the corner of California and Montgomery streets.

A sprucely dressed young man, with smooth, intelligent face, and dark hair and eyes, had just left a neighboring restaurant, when he was found suddenly confronted by the applicant for alms.

The appeal was made by a negro of almost giant stature, and as black, literally, as the ace of spades.

He had a good-natured face, sparkling eyes, and a mouth whose extraordinary size could be overlooked, on account of the pearly whiteness of two even rows of teeth.

His head was large and round as a bullet, his arms and fingers extremely long, and his feet, which were bare, were of prodigious size.

He wore a ragged apology of what had once been a broadcloth dress suit, while the hat upon his head, once a "stovepipe," was now wanting a crown.

The only other noticeable peculiarity about him, was a very handsome banjo, which he held tightly under his arm, as if he were fearful that it would get away from his custody.

All in all, he looked as if he had seen pretty hard times of late, although his healthy appearance hardly seemed to indicate that he was exactly in a starving condition.

The young man whom he had accosted, surveyed him a moment, rather frowningly; then burst into a laugh.

"Well, if you ain't a hard looking case!" he declared. "Who are you and where'd you blow in from?"

"I'se a citizen op de United States, I is, but I jes' 'rived back from Honolulu, dead bu'sted, sah, an' in de corndition you see me. My real name is Tobias Green, but to de perfesh I'se known as Whangdoodle Green."

"To the perfesh?"

"Yes, sah!—to de footlights—de minstrel stage, sah!"

"What were you doing in Honolulu?"

"I accompanied de Dixie Colored Serenaders to de Samwhich Islands, sah, an' de show bu'sted up, an' I was left widout a cent. Gor' a'mighty, boss, ye kin know I've seen hard times, an' great tribbelations, when et's took me nigh 'bout a yeah to get back to dis yer' country."

"And, so you're hungry, eh?"

"Deed I is, boss. I'se dat clean gone starved, dat I could eat shoe-leather!"

The young man laughed, as he gazed at the darky's huge feet.

"I see you have no shoes," he observed. "Where are they—did you eat them?"

Toby grinned.

"No, sar. Didn't get de chance, for some black Sandwhich nigger stole 'em! Tell yo' what, boss, dem yar Islanders dey be a bad lot, cl'ar through."

"No doubt you are right. Well, Tobias, I don't mind giving you a feed providing the expense won't bankrupt me. How much do you estimate it will take to fill you up?"

"Deed, I nebber had de chance to measure my appetite, boss, but I s'pec's suffin' less nor a barrel would do de job. Tell yo' what, boss, you jes' gib dis yar moke a good big feed an' he will return de compliment by gibben yo' suffin' you kin make some money out ob by hirin' one ob dem detective chaps to help yo'!"

"All right, Mister Green. Come along, and you shall have your breadbasket filled up for once!" and the young man led the way to a cheap restaurant on Geary street.

Here he gave orders to the waiter to furnish the negro with all he could eat, and they sat down, the young man not to eat, but bent on seeing just how much food Toby Green could store within his capacious stomach.

And Toby could eat!

He first started off on three plates of soup, followed by an equal number of courses of meats and vegetables, as well as two whole pies, a loaf of bread, and three glasses of ale—regular "bootleggs" at that.

When this menu was dispatched, the waiter handed the young man a check for \$2.60, while Toby leaned back in his chair, an intense look of satisfaction on his sable countenance.

"Dar, boss, I feels better, an' kyarn't eat no mo' befo' dinner-time!" he declared. "I shore kyarn't zactly s'press your gratitude fo' dis yar feed, but ef I kin ebber do ye a good turn fo' anudder sech feed, I'll be *dar!* 'Spec's, how ebber, as you mebbe kin make suffin' out ob de bottle."

"The bottle?"

"Shore. Tell yo' how it was. After all de hard trials an' great tribbelations I had on dem yar Sandwhich Islands, I at larst got chance to

fluctuate back to de States by workin' board a merchant ship. When dat ship left Honolulu, she went to Auckland, New Zealand, whar she took on a cargo; den she put back for de 'Nited States.

"Well, sah, it was while we was layin' in port at Auckland dat dis yar coon fished dis bottle out ob de water, an' found dat she contained a berry portant message from some man who was a prisoner on an islan'. I didn't say nuffin' to nobody, but jes' fotch it back to 'Merica to gib to somebody who was smart. Hyar's de bottle!"

As he finished speaking, Toby drew a large-mouthed whisky-bottle from his pocket and placed it on the table with an air of triumph.

The bottle was corked, and inside a piece of paper was visible.

Not without a good deal of curiosity, the young man seized the bottle, uncorked it, and withdrew the paper, which he spread out before him.

The paper was manila, and the writing was in blue pencil, and very handsomely executed.

The message was indeed an interesting one, and ran as follows:

"WEIRD ISLAND, South Pacific Ocean, }

"Thanksgiving Day, 1887. }

"To the Finder:—

"My name is Falconer Fairfax, of Devonshire, England, and formerly commander of the British merchantman, Swansea. I am a man of large bank and landed estate in England and Scotland, and the father of three children, Frank, Felix and Falka. My wife died years ago.

"Over one and a half years ago I started on my last voyage, prior to my intention to retire from life on the sea, my destination being New Zealand and other South Pacific points.

"My eldest son, Frank, and a crew of twenty men accompanied me, Frank going as first mate. All went well until we entered the trading waters of the South Pacific, when we encountered many storms and endured many hardships. The crew became mutinous, and at last, one night, when we were battling with a terrific storm, it was discovered that not only had the ship been scuttled, but the pumps had been tampered with, and it was plain we must go down.

"I ordered the boats manned, and we got off the Swansea; but no boats could live in such a sea, and we were swamped. That is the last I remember, until I found myself high and dry upon a strange island, whose name I do not know, and whose locality I cannot estimate, further than that it is in the vast ocean between New Zealand and the Sandwich Islands. In twenty years' experience in these waters I have never run across this island before.

"And as I have never, since living here, seen a sail, I reason it must be quite out of the usual routes of navigation and trade.

"I have named it Weird Island, because it is the most weird, uncanny, unearthly place that mind can conceive.

"Its extent I have not fully, as yet, explored, but I have found that it is peopled by a handful of nondescript savages of the most hideous appearance, who are possessed of sagacity not usually found in South Sea Islanders.

"They are controlled by a dwarf white man named Gogel, who admits that he is an English convict, though I doubt it. His ways are more American. At any rate, he is a bloodthirsty wretch, far more of a demon than a human.

"And now comes the strangest part of my story: A few days after I drifted ashore upon this island I met my son Frank, who, in company with Gogel, the dwarf, made me a prisoner. Then Frank made known to me that, as I had escaped drowning—the fate he had prepared for me by scuttling the ship—I could settle in my mind to spend the remainder of my days upon the island, as Gogel's slave. Furthermore, he said he should return to England, and step into possession of my estate, which, of course, he could do, in event of my death, as, of course, for generations the Fairfax estate has been entailed to the eldest son.

"Well, after learning of my son's most diabolical treachery, I was shut up in a rocky dungeon and kept there for a month; then I was released and really forced into abject slavery.

"Gogel told me that Frank had left the island, but in what manner I could not learn, and probably shall never know.

"Since then my life has been one of horror. At intervals of once a month the savages have a religious carousal, and then I am put to torture for their amusement. Gradually I am being killed, and I do not expect to live much longer.

"To-day I stole paper and pencil from Gogel to make a last appeal to Fate. I shall inclose this message in a bottle—one washed ashore from the Swansea—and cast it into the ocean. If it is ever picked up by any white man, it is my earnest prayer that he send it in all haste to the Lord Mayor of London, who will take action in the matter.

"My younger son, Felix Fairfax, is rich in his own right, and will devote his life and fortune to finding his poor, enslaved father.

"May God in heaven grant that to-night's outgoing tide waft this message to him or her, who will put its mission into early execution. Such is the fervent prayer of the subscriber,

"FALCONER FAIRFAX,

"Prisoner of Weird Island."

Here the singular, tempest-tossed message from the sea came to an end—a message that could but arouse the sympathies of the most hardened, unsympathetic nature.

CHAPTER II.

FELIX AND FALKA.

WHEN the young man had finished the perusal of this remarkable message from the unknown, he folded it up carefully, and put it away in the inside pocket of his coat.

Tobias Green, who had been waiting for a verdict, now spoke.

"Well, boss, what yer think ob dat yar billy-ducks, hey? Kyarn't beat dat, nohow, karn yo'?"

"It is certainly a matter entitled to earnest investigation," was the reply, "and as I am a detective, I shall see that it is attended to, with all possible haste!"

"Sho! yer don' mean to tell dis nigger you're a real detective?" gasped Toby.

"Certainly."

"'Fo' de Lor'! Who'd ebber thunk it? Say, boss, I'se mighty glad I met yo', fo' sw'ar to goodness you're a moke cl'ar after my own heart. Say, boss, s'pec's yo' wouldn't mind a heap, if I war to 'quire w'ot yo' name am?"

"Well, no, I can't say I'd kick over the whiffle-tree! My handle is Richard Bristol, otherwise Deadwood Dick, Junior."

"Sho! and Toby's eyes bulged out with astonishment. "I'se done heerd of you often, Marse Dick, deed I hab! An' do you yo'se f spec to go in search ob de man on de island?"

"I cannot tell yet. I shall first endeavor to communicate with Felix Fairfax, through the Lord Mayor of London. If a searching expedition is got up, perhaps I may join it."

"If you does go, Marse Dick, will you take me along?"

"You? Why, what would I take you along for?"

"Oh! jes' fo' fun. I would be yo' servant an' yo' body-guard, an', mo'n dat, I kno' heap about dem yar Souf 'Cific islands, 'ca'se we passed lots of 'em when I was on shipboard. Come, Marse Dick, karn't I go long?"

"I can make no promises, Toby. If I go, I'll consider the matter. Don't set any store on going, as you are likely to meet with disappointment. I must leave you now, but as you have done a good act, I'll do what I can for you. Here are ten dollars, with which to get some wearing apparel and a pair of shoes."

"Golly, boss, I thank you. If you needs me, I'll be around dis hyar neighborhood ebbery day, fo' I wants to g'long wi' yo', shore."

Giving the negro a ten-dollar note, Dick bade him good-by, and took his departure, and in a strange state of mind, betook himself to the hotel where he was registered.

He had only arrived in San Francisco, the previous day, from Chicago. It had been his intention to take a week's rest before starting north, as he contemplated doing.

His detective experience of the past few years had given him ample means, and it had been his idea to purchase a ranch, and settle down to the raising of cattle and breeding of blooded horses; but now all his prospects were suddenly altered.

Without warning, a new and important responsibility had been thrust upon him—that of seeing that a prisoner on an unknown island in the far South Pacific Ocean was released from a shocking captivity.

His duty was plain. It was an act of humanity that he was urgently called upon to attend to.

At the hotel he spent several hours in deliberating over what plan of action would be best, and finally concluded to follow the directions of the message.

Visiting a telegraph office, he, at considerable expense, caused a cable message to be sent to the Lord Mayor of London, as follows:

"Communicate at once with Felix Fairfax, Devonshire, and have him cable me his address. Have news of his father."

"R. M. BRISTOL

"— Hotel, San Francisco, Cal."

That very night he received a cablegram from the Lord Mayor, viz:

"Felix Fairfax is en route for your city, if he has not already reached there."

This of course gave a new aspect to affairs, for Deadwood Dick presumed it quite probable that if Sir Felix came to 'Frisco he would put up at a first-class hotel, and it would not be a difficult thing to find him, unless he registered under an alias, as the "gentry" sometimes do.

The hour at which the cablegram arrived, however, was too late to think of making any

search that night, so Dick sought his room for rest.

He was early astir, the next morning, however, and while waiting for breakfast, glanced over the morning papers.

The following notice was among the first to attract his attention:

"WANTED—A shrewd, energetic and successful detective; one whose time is his own, and has no incumbrances to prevent a prolonged journey. Salary satisfactory. Apply to

"F. FAIRFAX,

"Palace Hotel."

"Eureka! I have found it—or, rather, *him*!" Dick muttered, "and I must have an interview with him as soon as possible."

After breakfast he betook himself to the colossal and magnificent hostelry, the Palace Hotel, which is one of the interesting sights of the City of the Golden Gate.

A brief examination of the hotel register, elicited the following:

"FELIX FAIRFAX AND SISTER,

"England."

"Ah! he has brought his sister along, eh?" Dick said, thoughtfully. "I wonder what she is like? If she is as odd as her name, Falka, she ought to be a queer one."

He had no further time for conjecture, as he had already sent up his card, and the boy had returned, announcing that the gentleman would see him.

Felix and sister occupied a suite of three rooms on the third floor, and into the presence of the former the detective was conducted.

He found before him a tall, slim gentleman of two and thirty, with a decided Anglo-Saxon cast of countenance, rather languid blue eyes, a pleasant, rather womanish mouth, milky complexion, and blonde hair and side-whiskers.

He was lazily reclining in a luxurious armchair, and clad in a handsome dressing-gown, and fez smoking-cap.

The room was redolent with the smell of a real Havana, which the gentleman was smoking.

He rather languidly arose, on Dick's entrance, bridged a pair of gold-rimmed eyeglasses upon his nose, and placed Dick a chair.

"Pray be seated," he said. "You have called, I presume, in answer to my card in the morning papers?"

"I have," Dick replied. "I am at liberty and reckon I can fill the bill."

"You are young in experience, judging by your apparent age?"

"On the contrary, I have had a number of years of active and constant experience," Dick returned, "and can point with some little pride to the fact that I never lost a case I undertook."

"Indeed?" and young Mr. Fairfax scrutinized his visitor keenly through his glasses. "I suppose you have references, then?"

"Plenty of them—the mayor and chief of police of San Francisco, the chiefs of police of New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago and Galveston, not to mention the people of a dozen or more towns in the Territories. You will find by inquiry that the name of Deadwood Dick has a wide-spread notoriety."

"Judging from what you claim, I should say so. What I want is a shrewd, energetic man with plenty of grit, to assist me in finding a lost one who is very dear to me, and at the same time to act as a sort of protection to myself and sister, for our voyage will take us among a class of people of whom we know little or nothing. I am fitting out an expedition for this search, at great expense, and we may be gone for a long time. Therefore, you would want to consider well that fact before offering your services."

"I understand, sir, perfectly well, and so far as I am concerned, it would not matter to me whether one year or even more were consumed in the search, as I have no ties to bind me to any one particular place. My whole life has been nomadic."

"Very well. I like your frankness, and as your references are favorable, I dare say we can come to terms. Understand, I don't want a detective so much for actual ferreting business as I do for protection and for a confidant and aid. I have a deadly enemy—my own brother, too—and if he knew of the voyage I am about to undertake, he would devote all his villainous energies to baffle me, if not to sink me to the bottom of the sea. Therefore, I want a trusty man who can keep an eye out, all the time, for danger, and one who can combat with it should it come, for danger may lurk even on board my own ship. Understand?"

"Perfectly. And you can set stake on it that

you will find me the man you want!" Dick declared, enthusiastically.

"Enough said, then. Your pay will be ten dollars per day, whether we are gone ten weeks or ten years. I am having a staunch steam-yacht got in readiness, and we shall be ready to start four days hence. The boat now lies at the Front street wharf, foot of Broadway, taking on supplies; so when you have leisure you can run down and see how matters are progressing. Her captain's name is Peter Brown, and she will carry a crew of eight."

"Thank you; I will do so," Dick assented. "By the way, sir, have you really any hope of finding your father?"

Felix gave a start, and gazed at the questioner in genuine astonishment.

"My father?" he ejaculated, bending eagerly forward.

"Exactly. Is it not to search for him, that you have organized this expedition?"

"Yes! yes! But, how do you know? I have said nothing to any one as to the real object of my voyage."

"I base my supposition on the strength of some information I came into possession of, yesterday," Dick replied. "I met a tramp negro, late returning from the South Pacific, who solicited alms. I took him to a restaurant and gave him what he could eat, and in return he gave me a message he had found in a corked bottle, that was floating in the waters of Auckland Harbor, New Zealand. Here is the message!"

Dick took the paper from his pocket, and extended it toward Mr. Fairfax, who shrank away, pale and trembling.

"Tell me—tell me the worst!" he gasped. "Is my mission in vain—is he dead?"

"No! Read for yourself!" Dick replied.

With a glad cry Felix seized the paper, and eagerly devoured its message, even as a famished wolf might devour a piece of meat.

It seemed to take but a couple of seconds for him to peruse the communication—then, flinging the paper aside, with a glad cry, he sprung forward and threw his arms around Dick's neck.

"God bless you, old boy, God bless you!" he cried, tears of joy running down his cheeks. "My father lives! my father lives, and I owe you a friend's devotion for the happy news you have brought me!"

"You owe me nothing," Dick modestly replied. "It is the negro who deserves praise, not me!"

"True, the negro shall not be forgotten, but no man except you would have brought me such glorious news. You were here under a lucky star, young man, and with your luck as our guide, we shall find my father—I feel it, ay, I know it!"

"Well, we'll make a try for it, anyhow!" Dick smiled.

"Of course we will, old boy, and not a moment is to be lost in completing preparations for departure from this port. Falka! Falka! come here!"

In answer to his call, the door of an adjoining room opened, and a young woman, apparently not over seventeen years of age, entered the room.

She was slight, under the average height of Englishwomen, and rather petite but very gracefully formed.

Her face while not full and round, was remarkably pretty, every feature indicating gentleness and refinement, while her complexion was very fair. A roguish little mouth, sparkling brown eyes that spoke of a lively disposition, and rippling sunny hair, added to a picture that Deadwood Dick inwardly voted absolutely charming.

She was attired in a plain black cloth walking habit, and her only ornaments were a magnificent diamond brooch that glittered at her throat. Felix ran forward, with boyish enthusiasm and seized her by the hand.

"Come, Tommy," he said, "I must introduce you to our new friend, Mr. Richard Deadwood Dick Bristol. Bristol, old boy, this is my sister, Falka. I call her Tommy, for short, because, you see, she's a regular little harum-scarum, when she takes a notion, and that's pretty often."

The introduction acknowledged, Felix continued, addressing his sister:

"And now, Falka, I have wonderful news. Mr. Bristol has found our father, and he still lives. What do you think of that?"

"Oh! Mr. Bristol, is it really true?" Falka asked, eagerly.

"We have learned that Mr. Fairfax is a prisoner upon an island in the South Pacific!"

Dick replied, respectfully, "and we shall leave nothing undone that will tend to effect his early rescue."

"Oh! I am so glad," Falka cried, clasping her hands joyfully. "I am sure we are very grateful to you for bringing such welcome news, ain't we, Felix?"

"Well, we ought to be guillotined if we were not, Tommy," Felix replied heartily.

They conversed for some time longer, and then, at Felix's suggestion, the two men made their way to the water front, where the chartered steam yacht Ariel was getting ready for South Pacific waters.

CHAPTER III.

THE ARIEL.

THE Ariel was tied up at a dock close in the vicinity of Broadway and Market street, and young Fairfax and Deadwood Dick were not long in reaching her.

She was as handsome a craft of her kind as could be found on San Francisco Bay, and had been built by a rich speculator, who failed afterward, with careful details as to speed and comfort.

The present owner and captain, a veteran skipper named Peter Brown, had bought her cheap, and had thoroughly overhauled, handsomely refurnished and embellished her, and, as a result, she was in great demand for pleasure trips, for, so to speak, she could show "her heels" to any craft in the waters where she was best known.

"Fine craft, isn't she?" Fairfax observed, with commendable pride, as he and Dick boarded her.

"Well, if my opinion is worth anything, she is," Dick confessed. "But, the truth is, I'm so much of a laud-shark that I don't know a jibboom, or whatever you call it, from a spanker."

Felix laughed heartily.

"Oh! I'll make a sailor of you once I get you afloat," he declared.

Everything about the deck was in order, and the floor was clean enough to eat off of.

In the engine-room equal neatness prevailed, the brass and steel-work upon the engines being polished to a nicety, and all the tools were in their proper places.

In the forecastle everything was neat as wax, and the same could be said of the steward's quarters.

The cabin and state-rooms were simply luxurious, no pains or expense having been spared to make them veritable cheerful homes.

Deadwood Dick was enthusiastic in his praises, and more than once expressed his pleasure at the opportunity of taking a trip on such a genuine floating palace.

"But, it must cost you a great deal of money to charter such a boat?" he observed.

"It does," Fairfax replied, "but then, money is no object, so long as I can find my poor old father, alive and well."

"I infer that you did not know whether your father was living or not when you planned this expedition?"

"I did not, although my suspicions were strong that he was put away, somewhere. But, wait—I'll tell you what of the story you do not already know. My father was, and is now, if still living, sole heir to the Fairfax estate, which for generations, has descended to the eldest son, and the estate has for years both enlarged in size and increased in value, until now it is, in its incomes worth an enormous sum."

"My father, early in life, took to the sea, and never left it until that ill-fated last voyage, which was to have been his last. He accumulated a goodly fortune on the water, and, before he left on this last voyage, gave all this to me, in money; for my elder brother being still alive and healthy, my prospects of a succession to the estate, were small.

"My brother, Frank, and heir of Fairfax, was from early manhood a wild, dissolute fellow, a gambler and *roue*, and cared more for himself than for all else in the world, and it was with deep regret that I saw father make him mate on that last trip of the Swansea, to the Tropics.

"Father meant all right, for he wanted to get Frank away from his evil associations, and make a better man of him. Frank was always first in father's thought as in England the heir always takes precedence in everything.

"But, I knew Frank better than father; I knew he coveted Fairfax, and that in his heart of hearts, he had no more regard or respect for father, than for the lowest miner in all Devonshire. Therefore, as I have said, it was with deep regret I saw him sail away on the Swansea."

Something told me there were breakers ahead, as father used to say.

"Well, after many months, Frank came back, and reported the loss of the Swausea, with all on board except himself. Of course he entered into possession of Fairfax, with its boundless acres, its herds, hamlets, industries and princely revenue, and for six months, he held high carnival. His gay style of living, his brilliant balls—God spare the word; I should have said brawls—his mad escapades, and innumerable intrigues, were the themes of gossip in all Devonshire.

"The grand old home, Fairfax Manor, knew me no more. I was literally barred out; but, it was myself who did the barring. Although Frank had brought disgrace to the proud old name of Fairfax, I swore to keep it *sans reproche* so far as I was concerned.

"Well, all things must end, and so did my brother's riotous reign at Fairfax. I predicted it in the start, and it came to pass.

"One night, in a fury of drink and passion, Frank put the first stain of blood upon the polished floor of the manor. He brutally murdered the woman to whom he was engaged. There were three witnesses to the crime, who confronted him as he was in the act of striking th last blow.

"They were myself, the Bailiff of Fairfax, and a man whom I will introduce you to shortly. Then it was that I committed the one real crime of my life. I told Frank if he would give up everything belonging to the family possessions and leave Great Britain, never to return, we would allow him to go without arrest.

"Cowering wretch that he was, he was only too ready to go; and, to this day, the death of poor Mabel Clancy is unavenged, although the English authorities will give five thousand pounds for the arrest of Francis Fairfax!"

The young man paused.

During his story he had gradually become agitated, until beads of perspiration stood out upon his brow.

"Did you ever afterward hear from your brother?" Dick ventured to ask.

"Only once. He was then in America, and in this very city of San Francisco!" Felix replied.

"He wrote to me, to say that he was well, and hoped to live to see me and Falka in our coffins, and further added that I need not be surprised, if I should some day receive the decapitated head of our father, as a souvenir of his—Frank's—appreciation.

"This at once aroused my suspicions that father was not yet dead, but a prisoner upon one of the many Southern Pacific islands. So constantly and strongly did this belief prey upon my mind that at last I and Falka resolved to devote the rest of our lives to searching for father. Hence we came to America, and here we are, preparing for what I now have every hope will be a successful expedition."

"And my hope is the same!" Dick assured. "Indeed, I feel great confidence that you will be the magnet of our success. And now, sir, I want to find this negro, from whom you got the message."

"What for?"

"Because I want to suitably reward him for finding the message, and having the good sense to give it into possession of so worthy a person as yourself. Moreover, I want him to accompany the expedition, if he can be induced so to do. We shall want a servant, and no doubt he could fill the bill!"

"I am not prepared to say as to that!" Dick answered, "but I am sure he will be willing to go, for he told me as much, when he gave me the message. The thing is to find him!"

"What is his name?"

"Tobias Whangdoodle Green, as he says."

"Good Heaven! what a name!" and Sir Felix roared with laughter. "The name alone is enough to swamp a ship. However, we may need his services: so let's hunt him up!"

"As you like. We may find him on California street."

They left the Ariel, and made their way in the direction of California and Montgomery streets, but it was not their luck to find Toby in that neighborhood.

They found him at last, however, in a saloon on Third street, where he was picking the banjo and singing, to the delight of a crowd of beer-guzzlers, such songs as "Mary Went With a Coon," and so forth.

The moment he spied Dick, however, Toby ceased his musical demonstrations, and came forward with a broad grin of delight.

"Golly, Marse Dick, be dat you?" he exclaimed. "Tell you what, I'se pow'ful glad to

see yo'; I is, suah! Jes' been tryin' to 'muse de gentlemen wid a song or two, but, when de collection-box am passed 'roun' dar ain't no jingle ob coin. Tell yo' what, boss, dese am hard times fo' de pore culled folk!"

"Why, Toby, you ought not to complain. Only yesterday I gave you ten dollars with which to get you a new hat and a pair of shoes, but I don't see that your appearance is changed any. What did you do with the money?"

"Tell yo' how it was, boss. Met an ole chum o' mine named Sam Spoon, an', well, sah, he held four aces ag'in' my fo' kings, an' took de pot. Mighty sorry, boss, but dem am de fac's, an' thar ain't no squeezin' roun' 'em!"

"Well, it served you right," Dick declared, with a laugh. "If you will buck the tiger, you must expect to lose. However, that's neither here nor there. Do you still want to accompany me in search for the prisoner of *Weird Island*?"

"Deed, an' Gord knows I'd be tickled done nigh to deff to 'company you."

"Very well. This gentleman here is Felix Fairfax, son of the man who threw the bottle into the ocean, which you afterward found. He wants a general servant, and if you can fill the bill, he will take you along."

"Golly, reckons I kin do dat yar same, Marse Dick. But, be you goin' long wid de 'spedition, 'cause ef you ain't, nudder am dis chile."

"Oh! certainly I am going, but, even if I were not, you'll find Mr. Fairfax a good master."

"Yas," and Toby scrutinized his future boss from head to foot. "Yas, he done look kind ob 'spectable, but dat yar may be only skin-deep. Dem yar Britishers habn't got no more 'spec's or lub fo' a tar-heel 'coon dan a freckled rooster hab fo' a Junebug."

"It isn't a matter of love at all, young man," Felix assured him, laughing. "Your duties will be simply those of a servant, to wait upon myself, my sister, and such other guests as accompany me, including Mr. Bristol here, to whom you seem to have taken a fancy. Now, how much do you expect to get a month for such service as may be required of you?"

"Well, boss, dat depen's summat. Karn I take along de banjo, fo' Gor' a'mighty knows I wouldn't part wi' de ole instrumen', nohow?"

"Of course you can take along the banjo. As it may be fifty years before we see America again, we'll probably be glad to have some music on board."

"Well, den, boss, I'll work fo' ten dollars a month, an' sound."

"All right. You meet Mr. Bristol at the corner of Front and Broadway this afternoon, and he will see that you are fitted out in more becoming attire."

"But I want to tole yo', boss, I don't wanter be fixed up like no dude, fo' dat am ag'in' my skonscientious scrooples. I war born an' fotched up a plain, ebbery-day, tar-heeled nigger, an' I can't be made no whiter on de exterior 'cept yo' whitewash me. 'Sides dat, a dressed-up 'coon hab too much bother bowin' an' scrapin' to de tender sex, yo' see."

Both laughed at Toby's oddities, and leaving the saloon the two made their way up-town.

"I want you to be at the ship the better part of the time, until we start," Felix enjoined, before they parted, "and to particularly observe what is going on, and that all preparations are properly made. Study every person you come in contact with, and remember that I want to know when you suspect anything or any one. We cannot be too careful, for I have a premonition of forthcoming trouble, and my brother will be at the bottom of it."

CHAPTER IV.

THE BEGINNING OF THE VOYAGE.

The next two days were busy ones to Deadwood Dick, for, in connection with a few personal preparations, his time was spent in seeing that nothing was left undone in getting the Ariel ready for departure, and overseeing such particulars as did not belong to the captain to attend to.

Captain Peter Brown he found to be a jolly, whole-souled old sea-dog, even-tempered, and fond of a joke or a yarn, and yet ever alert and a thorough disciplinarian, so far as his boat and its service were concerned.

He and Deadwood Dick at once became good friends, and under their management, the Ariel was ready for departure within two days after the events last recorded.

The crew was a picked-up one, of several nationalities, but, under Captain Brown's tutelage, soon knew their duties, and were a well-behaved lot.

The first, in fact the only mate, was a man to

whom Dick did not take a liking. He was a short, thick-set, powerfully-built fellow, well along toward forty years of age, and his bulldog visage was red, scarred, and vicious of aspect, while his small, bead-like eyes had a snake-like glitter that was not pleasant to behold.

He was loud-mouthed and profane, and Dick, when he spoke to Captain Brown regarding the fellow's demeanor, received the following good-natured reply:

"Oh, Bob Coots is all right, only he is a little bluff in his way. That I can easily remedy. We couldn't have slipped a better man, for he knows every inch of a craft from a sloop to a man-o'-war."

So, although Dick's unsavory opinion of Mr. Bob Coots was not materially altered, he said no more.

The engineer and the steward were good-natured well-meaning men, and, in fact, there was but one besides Coots among the crew, whom Dick had any notion of being suspicious of.

The second exception was called Black Breck, from the fact that the whole of his face except the nose, eyes, and a narrow strip of forehead, was covered with an immense shaggy beard of jetty black, while his hair of the same color was quite as profuse.

His attire was that of a Spanish sailor, and, although he was morose and taciturn, and said little or nothing to any one, Dick did not fancy his brigandish appearance.

Whangdoodle Green had already taken up his new role of cabin-boy, and, although Dick had caused him to be fitted out in a tasty suit of livery, Toby made a decidedly cumbersome and ludicrous appearance.

On the 18th of February, the Ariel was all ready to leave port. Late that afternoon Felix, Falka, and two other persons came aboard, and immediately sought their respective rooms.

Deadwood Dick did not see them to speak to them, nor did he remember of having seen Felix's two guests before, for both were evidently foreigners.

The elder of the two, was a tall individual, of angular proportions, and aged about fifty-five years. His features were hard cast and heavily lined, with a sensual mouth, steel-gray eyes, and iron-gray hair and side-whiskers.

He was attired in a prim-looking suit of black and Kossuth hat, but wore no jewelry, whatever.

His companion was only about twenty-one years of age, and a decided blonde, with a round, pleasant face, devoid of the hirsute, a genial pair of blue eyes, and sunny hair.

He was somewhat flashily attired, and enveloped in a great coat that reached to his heels.

Dick had only time to make these casual observations, ere the party went below.

Just before sunset, the Ariel loosened from her moorings, and pointed her nose down the harbor toward the Golden Gate.

It was the close of a beautiful day, with a bracing semi-tropical breeze stirring the waters into graceful, softly undulating billows, and the little inland sea, as San Francisco Bay has aptly been termed, presented a mirror of such unsurpassed loveliness as must have thrilled the dulled spectator with a sense of admiration.

There, as we move down the harbor, lie round-backed Goat and Angel Islands; and Alcatraz, with its terraces and picturesque citadel; grand vistas open beyond on either hand, all lit up by the dying sunlight in a bath of molten gold.

The bay is alive with craft of all kinds; here a Mexican gunboat, yonder a Russian frigate and there the junk-boats of the Chinese shrimp-catchers.

Stately ferry-boats plow across the bay to the Brooklyn-like suburb of Oakland; others to Alameda, with its esplanade of white bathing pavilions, and others still to Sausalito, and San Rafael under the shade of dark Mount Tamalpais.

Far ahead, not unlike the Narrows of New York Bay, but much grander to the view, lies the famous Golden Gate, which once passed, you have fully debouched upon the mighty expanse of the Pacific Ocean.

There is something so oriental in what you see as you pass down San Francisco Bay, that you find yourself imagining yourself cruising in foreign waters.

"Grand! magnificent!" Deadwood Dick said, as he stood forward, glass in hand, and drank in the glorious gold-tinted panorama. "I don't believe the equal of this scene could be had if one were to travel around the whole world!"

"And I am of the same opinion, Mr. Bristol. This is simply exquisite, this golden sunset and the magnificent scenery."

Dick had supposed himself alone, when he spoke, but, on turning, was surprised to find

Falka Fairfax standing by his side, wrapped in a sealskin coat and a jaunty little sailor's cap upon her head.

"Oh, I thought I was alone," Dick returned, bowing. "So you like the scene, miss?"

"Oh! it is perfectly enchanting," was the reply. "But, Mr. Bristol, please don't use that formal 'miss' in addressing me. I'm not in precise England, now, and I want to have the privilege for once of being plain Falka Fairfax, and do as you Americans do. You do pretty much as you please, don't you?"

"Well, yes, to some extent. But there is a limit to all things!"

"Very true, and I shall consider that you are exceeding your limit, if you persist in addressing me with the formal 'miss.' Please call me just Tommy, as Felix does."

"Well, I should hate to displease you, Miss Falka, but I am sure your brother would object, and not without reason, to my addressing you as familiarly as that. Let me call you Falka, then; that will seem more appropriate!"

"Well, suit yourself. I had no idea you Americans were such sticklers about the conventionalities," Falka returned, with a smile. "Oh! Mr. Bristol, what is that island, yonder—the one with the grand pile of buildings that remind one of an ancient Italian chateau?"

"That is Alcatraz, and from appearances, I should judge it was a fortification commanding the port. Ah! here comes your brother."

Felix now approached, and Dick fancied there was a slight frown of annoyance upon his usually sunny face.

"Ah! looking at scenery?" he observed, pausing beside them. "It is pleasant, 'pon my word. But, Tommy, dear, I am afraid you will take cold here; and besides, Sir Rupert requests the pleasure of your presence in the *salon*!"

"Pshaw! Sir Rupert is a bore!" Falka said, pettishly, as she turned away.

Felix made no reply, nor did he say anything to the detective. Instead, he turned, and walked to another part of the yacht, while Dick leaned against the railing, and whistled softly.

"Obo! I wonder what *this* means?" he mused. "If I am not greatly mistaken, the Fairfax pride has been stirred. Is it because Felix does not approve of the fair Falka's talking to *me*? By Jove! it would seem so. Evidently this Sir Rupert is Felix's choice for brother-in-law. Well, so be it! It's none of my business, anyhow. If Fairfax don't want his sister to converse with me, let him keep her away from me, but, I've an idea that won't be ever so easy a job, for Sir Felix admitted that Tommy had a penchant for having her own way."

At that time Dick thought no more of the matter; but, later, it recurred to him with considerable more force, and he wondered if a speck of trouble were not looming up on the distant horizon, which would gradually bring about a rupture between himself and the man he had bargained to serve.

If there might be such a possibility, Dick could have safely wished that he had never set foot on board the *Ariel*.

CHAPTER V.

TRouble BREWING.

THE sun dipped into the western horizon with a blaze of departing glory, and the restless caps of the waves were tinged with golden beauty—then, the sun disappeared, altogether, and a peculiar hush stole over all.

The yacht, under sail, and with engines working, made rapid headway, and, as the wind was off the ocean, there was little for the sailors to do but lounge about the deck.

A half-grown moon came up, by and by, and, together with the stars, shed enough light so that the course of the yacht was plain for a considerable distance ahead.

Although there was nothing in particular to keep Dick on deck, he remained there until a late hour—until the *Ariel* had passed through the Golden Gate, and out upon the bosom of the mighty Pacific. Then, as everything seemed to be going along smoothly, on deck, he went below, to his comfortable quarters, a snug little state-room, which he had fitted up to suit himself, and throwing himself upon his bunk, was soon asleep.

It was rather late when he got on deck, the next morning, and he found Mr. Fairfax and his two friends already there.

It was a glorious sunlit morning, and the *Ariel*, being well out to sea and steadily advancing to the southward, the weather was perceptibly warmer.

There was something novel and exciting about life on the ocean wave, that thrilled Dick with an irresistible fascination, and, standing apart

from Felix and his party, he leaned idly against the lee-rail, and gazed far out upon the white-capped waste of waters.

"If Fairfax wants anything of me, let him make it manifest," he thought.

Felix evidently did not want anything of his detective, however, so far as the present was concerned, for he, Sir Rupert, and the tall, angular gentleman with the gray side-whiskers, seemed deeply engrossed in conversation.

Directly Miss Falka came on deck, looking as fresh and pretty as a rosebud, but instead of joining her brother's group, she came straightway over to the detective.

"Oh, Mr. Bristol, isn't this a delightful morning!" she exclaimed. "I do so like the sea and the fresh air. It is so invigorating."

"It is a fine morning, indeed, and I trust the whole voyage may be accompanied by such weather," Dick replied. "That is hardly probable, however, as when we get further south, the captain tells me, we are likely to encounter any amount of rough weather at this season of the year. I trust you rested well last night, Miss Fairfax."

"No, sir, I did not. I did not retire until a late hour, thanks to that spoony, Sir Rupert Ralston. Oh, he is perfectly horrid, and I wish Felix had left him ashore."

"Miss Fairfax," Dick said, after a moment's reflection, "you will pardon me for taking the liberty of expressing my opinion, but I do not think your brother approves of your speaking familiarly to me."

A merry peal of laughter burst from the maiden's cherry lips.

"The idea!" she exclaimed. "Just as if it was any of my brother's business to whom I speak. He is no ruler over me."

"That may all be, but I fear he does not approve of any intimacy between us."

"It does not make one bit of difference, Mr. Bristol; I shall talk with whoever I like, and if Felix don't like it, he can do the next best thing. If he thinks to constantly bore me with the society of that odious Sir Rupert Ralston, he is greatly mistaken. There was never a Fairfax yet who didn't have a will of their own."

While they were conversing Dick had covertly watched Sir Rupert and Felix, and noted their unfavorable glances in his direction.

"Felix is on nettles," he thought. "The ocean smiles serenely under the sunlight, but there's a storm brewing on this deck sure's my name is Dick!"

And he was right, for Fairfax soon approached with a haughty stride.

"Falka, Sir Rupert would speak with you," he said, giving his sister a sharp glance.

Falka walked away with a toss of her head.

Despite her assertion of self-independency, it was evident she was not inclined to excite her brother to anger by acting contrary to his wishes. When she had gone, Felix turned to Dick.

"Detective," he said, "I shall be under the painful necessity of making a request of you."

"Very well, sir," Dick replied, calmly, well knowing what was coming. "I am at your service."

"The matter is this," the Briton said: "this intimacy between you and my sister must end."

"Sir!"

"I repeat, this intimacy between you and Falka must end. I did not employ you to make love to my sister, who is not only far above you in station, but is also the affianced of Sir Rupert Ralston, my guest!"

Deadwood Dick flushed, angrily.

"Mr. Fairfax!" he retorted, "you entirely mistake whom you are talking to. I am astonished at you. Neither have I *made love* to your sister, nor have I sought her confidence. Knowing the haughty nature of Englishmen who chance to be of the gentry class, I presumed you would object to your sister's speaking familiarly to me, and told her so, but a few moments ago. And now I say to you—if I am not to be permitted the honor of addressing the young lady, I advise you to keep your sister under your constant surveillance, for if she addresses me, I, as a gentleman, am bound to respond!"

For a moment the two men eyed each other—Dick, cool and defiant; Fairfax flushed and half ashamed of himself—then, the latter turned and strode away, without a word.

Directly, the Fairfax-Ralston party went below, and that was the last Dick saw of Falka, for two whole days, during which he spent the most of his time on deck, and took his meals at the officers' table.

A barrier had been thrown up between himself and his employer, and, although regularly summoned to the first or guest's table, he beg-

ged to be excused and dined at the next table with the captain.

When on deck, he took particular pains to keep to himself.

But, the end was not yet.

The night of the second day after the offensive conversation, at a few minutes before twelve o'clock, Falka stole on deck, and approached Dick, who was standing in the stern of the yacht.

"Oh! Mr. Bristol, they treat you shamefully, don't they?" she said, laying one soft white hand upon his arm.

"Miss Fairfax, I beg that you will go below!" Dick urged, gently removing her hands. "You know that your brother would be very angry if he saw you here and at such an hour!"

"Then, you don't like to see me?" she interrogated, gazing intently up into his face.

"It is not your brother's wish that I should!" Dick replied evasively. "If he should find you here, it would place me in a very unpleasant position."

"True! How thoughtless of me! I will go at once. I only wanted to tell you that I am so sorry they do not treat you well!"

She turned, then, to go, but recoiled, with a startled cry.

And no wonder, for confronting them, with a gleaming sword in hand, stood Sir Rupert Ralston, a peculiarly significant smile upon his handsome face!

"So I've caught you playing truant, eh, Miss Fairfax?" he said. "Very well, I'll refrain from reporting the matter to your estimable brother, but, at the same time, I shall insist upon having a settlement with your plebeian admirer here. One of us only, can be entitled to the consideration of the fair Falka!"

A crisis was at hand!

CHAPTER VI.

A FISTIC ENCOUNTER.

It is perhaps needless for us to add, that the sudden appearance of Sir Rupert upon the scene, sword in hand, ready for battle, was as surprising to Dick Bristol as it was alarming to Falka, and for the moment the young American did not know what to say, or how to act.

It so happened that he was not armed, at the time, having left his breast revolver in his room. Consequently, he was quite at the mercy of the impetuous and jealous young baronet.

But, after the first moment of surprise, he was once more his cool self again, and a faint smile of defiance wreathed his lips, as he gazed at dapper Sir Rupert.

"So you would have a settlement with me, eh?" he demanded.

"Certainly!" the Briton cried, angrily. "How dare you hold clandestine interviews with my affianced bride, you mongrel Yankee?"

"Because I so choose, you ill-bred bull-pup!" Dick retorted. "In the first place, I did not seek an interview with Miss Fairfax, and in the second place, I do not believe she is affianced to you, for she has better sense than to bind herself to a missing link like you!"

This scathing retort caused Sir Rupert to fairly boil over with furious rage, which if such a thing were possible, was doubly increased by Falka's confirmation of the detective's doubt.

"No! Mr. Bristol!" she cried, "I am not affianced to Sir Rupert Ralston, nor do I ever intend to be. He has no claim upon me, none whatever!"

"Oh! I haven't, eh?" sneered the knight. "Well, my lady, you'll soon discover whether I have or have not. Your brother happens to have the decision in the matter. As for you, you low-lived ruffian," turning to Dick, "either you get down on your knees, and beg my pardon, or I'll run you through, with my sword!"

"Oh no you won't," Dick rejoined. "I've no fear of your doing that, for you are too big a coward to kill even a cat. As for begging your pardon, I'm not in that business. If you really want *fight*, throw down your booby's blade and meet me as men fight—with your fists!"

"Gentlemen fight with gentlemanly weapons!" Sir Rupert replied. "Once more, and for the last time, will you beg my pardon? Refuse, and I'll drive my blade through your heart!"

"Beg your pardon, you lout! Never!" Dick cried, defiantly. "There never was an Englishman born, yet, who could make any real American cringe to him."

So far as Sir Rupert was concerned, this was literally the straw that broke the camel's back. Fostered in the lap of luxury, with a lineage which he was proud to trace back for generations, it was gall and wormwood to his pride

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that this cool, taunting son of Uncle Sam, should dare to address him as an equal.

With a cry not unlike that of an exasperated panther, he raised his sword, and sprung forward, murder in his heart.

That he would have accomplished his purpose, had there not been an intervention, is more than probable.

Falka, in her fright, had sunk unconscious to the floor. The sailors on duty kept at a respectful distance; but, at that moment a gigantic form bounded forward; a strong arm warded off Sir Rupert's blow with such force, as to fling the baronet to the deck, and sent his blade flying overboard, and Whangdoodle Green stood grinning upon the scene.

"Lor' massy, Marse Dick, dat was a mighty cluss call, I tolle yer!" he exclaimed.

Dick nodded, and waited for Sir Rupert to regain his equilibrium, which he did, with painful slowness; for in falling he had evidently been hurt.

Dick did not know this, however, for, when the baronet was fairly upon his feet the now irate detective rushed upon him, and with a couple of strokes, knocked the Englishman senseless to the deck.

But, this did not end the matter, for at this juncture, Felix Fairfax and his gray-whiskered friend came hurriedly on deck, and comprehending the state of affairs, began an attack upon Dick.

But they found they did not have the detective alone to tackle, for, true to his professed regard, Toby at once joined with Dick, and showed himself to be quite capable of dexterously handling his heavy fists and brawny arms.

Both Sir Rupert and his companion, whom Dick had learned was called Professor Peabody, were splendid boxers, but, they lacked the science of the detective, and the brute strength of the negro, and they soon found that they were no match for the twain they had attacked.

"Curses seize you, you black imp!" roared Felix whom Toby had selected as his antagonist. "I'll break your infernal head for you!"

"No yo' wont," replied Toby, skillfully parrying the blows leveled at him, and now and then giving his opponent a "staggerer." "Yo' jes' kyarn't t'uch one side of dis yere moke, nohow, Mars'r Fairfax. Tobias hab been dar, befo' you war got yar eye-teef cut. He's de American breakbone, he is!"

"Help! help!" yelled Felix, as his head began to swim, and more stars appeared before his vision than would fit out a small-sized firmament. "Help! I say. Coots! Bob Coots!"

The appeal was not unheeded, for the ugly-faced mate came bounding to the spot, just as Dick succeeded in laying out Professor Peabody in an insensible condition, upon the planks.

"Aha! now I've got you!" Coots cried, with a savage laugh. "I've been itching to get a good whack at you, me bucko!"

"And I've been afflicted with a like yearning to get a whack at you!" was Dick's rejoinder. "So come into my parlor, said the spider to the fly! If I don't polish you off to the queen's taste, you can have the championship of the Ariel!"

Then, they went at it, slugging for all they were worth; such a battle the deck of the good yacht Ariel, had never seen.

Tobias had, in the mean time, knocked Fairfax flat upon his back, and stood over him waiting for him to come to time.

But with his desire to see Deadwood Dick "done up" by Coots, Felix had no notion to arise and risk the further test of the negro's pugilistic powers.

Captain Brown and his crew stood aloof.

They had not personally been called upon to interfere, with the exception of Coots, and as Dick, with his affable ways, had made friends not only with the captain but with most of the crew, there was no disposition to interfere, to his discomfiture.

As to Dick and his new antagonist, they seemed to be well matched. Coots was short, stubborn, powerful but clumsy, and hard to hurt. Richard was light, agile, of lightning quickness, and careful. He knew he had a job to attend to, and must bring all his faculties and physical prowess to accomplish the mate's defeat.

Victory now meant a great deal.

Coots got "first blood" with a left-hander upon Dick's cheek-bone, which caused blood to ooze from the detective's nose. This Coots followed up with what was meant to be an undercut with his right upon the jaw; but in this he failed, for, with a skillful right-hander upon the neck, Dick landed his man upon the deck, head down and heels a-rising.

Coots was up again in an instant, but only to go down three times in succession, and when he got up for the last time it was with murder in his eyes.

Such a defeat he had probably never known before, and like an infuriated beast, a dangerous-looking Dirk-knife in his grasp, he leaped at his antagonist.

Where the blade came from Dick could not tell, but his quick eye detected its gleam soon enough to enable him to leap to one side; and, not able to check his momentum, Coots stumbled and went crashing against the companionway coping, and, strangely enough, impaled himself upon the now reversed blade of the knife, his life-blood gushing forth and dyeing the deck whereon he at once fell.

Then Captain Brown interfered.

"Mr. Fairfax," he said to the down-fallen Briton, "I command this ship and you have chartered it; consequently, you have the say in this affair."

Dick stood leaning upon the railing, resting but alert. He was not excited; a cooler, more collected man could not be found aboard the yacht.

Felix was silent a moment, his burning gaze fixed upon the American and his sable companion; then the good part of his really gentlemanly nature seemed to assert itself, for he called out:

"Help me up!"

The first to obey this call was Toby, but with a spring to his side Dick lifted his employer to his feet.

No word was spoken for a moment; then Fairfax extended his hand.

You have proven yourself a good man. But for your own sake, don't let a repetition of this trouble occur. That's all!" and, turning away, Felix took Captain Brown one side, and the two held a brief consultation.

Falka, Sir Rupert and the professor were lifted from the deck and carried below, and a blanket was thrown over the body of Bob Coots, which was left where it had fallen, for the man really was dead.

Dick and Toby went forward together. The expression upon the detective's face did not indicate that he was pleased with what had occurred—a fact that did not escape Toby's notice.

"Lor', Marse Dick," he observed. "Ise be thinkin' dat de Britishers won't come roun' to sample der meffod ob our maulers any mo', will dey, boss?"

"I hope not!" Dick replied grimly. "I don't want more trouble while I'm on this boat. I fear, however, there'll be plenty more of it, ere this voyage is over."

"Yo' does?"

"Yes. Sir Rupert is a hot-headed, jealous-tempered fool, and it wouldn't surprise me if he tried to influence Fairfax to abandon the voyage and put back for 'Frisco!"

But the Ariel kept on her way, and soon enough the young detective had reason to know that the trouble was not yet over.

CHAPTER VII.

A STARTLING REVELATION.

THE next day the Ariel struck heavy weather, and Captain Brown gave it as his opinion that it would not clear up for a number of days—not, at least, until the port of Honolulu was reached.

Dick kept pretty exclusively to himself, and saw no more of Miss Fairfax, although he learned from Toby that she kept closely to her state-room.

Sir Rupert, Felix and Professor Peabody were much on deck, however, the first and the latter mentioned each wearing an elaborate black eye.

They kept at a safe distance from Dick, evidently having no desire for his closer acquaintance.

Coots, in the mean time, had been buried at sea, and discipline and strict order once more reigned.

The black-haired, black-whiskered, brigandish-looking fellow, to whom reference was made in a preceding chapter, now came in for a good share of Dick's observation, though just why it was, the detective could not have satisfactorily explained.

There was something so dark and forbidding about the man that it was but natural for one so sharp as Dick to study him.

He attended to the work assigned him with a punctuality and perfection that were really monotonous, and it was seldom that he spoke to any one—even his comrades, the sailors.

It was with some surprise, therefore, that

Dick found himself addressed by Black Breck, as he was named.

It was the second day of the squally weather, and the two men were standing amidships.

"Mister Fairfax and his party keep out of your way since the fight?" Breck observed.

"So it seems," Dick replied.

"I've seen a good deal of fighting, and used to be sort of handy with the gloves myself," Breck continued; "but I'll be blowed if I've seen any one in a long time that could handle himself as clever as you did. Too bad about Coots, however, for he and I were chums."

"You were? Why, I never saw the two of you speaking together."

Black Breck smiled.

"That may all be!" he answered, for I am not a very communicative man. By the way, from what I have observed, I judge that you are a detective in Mr. Fairfax's employ."

"I do not know what gave you that impression."

"Oh! that was easy to form, because you have no work to do except to watch what others are doing. I should not have referred to the matter only that I rather approved of your grit after that little knockout, and I thought it would be a square deal to advise you to keep a weather eye out for more trouble."

"What trouble?"

"Oh! I don't know just now when or in what shape it will come, but you can safely bet that there's one man on board who does not mean you shall live to see the end of the Ariel's voyage."

"Do you mean yourself, sir?" Dick demanded, abruptly, staring hard at the man.

"Well, I reckon not," was the reply. "I don't know as I have any grudge against you, and, if I had, I reckon I should think twice before attempting to carry it out. My reference is to an enemy you have on board, who is trying to set the boss against you. And he'll do it, as sure's my name is Breck. That's all. Look out for yourself. Good-by!" and the dark man skurried away.

The gale was increasing in violence, and it took the united efforts of the crew to handle the yacht. At sunset the wind slackened considerably, and the vessel rode along through the now rough sea more easily; but Captain Brown shook his head dubiously as he gazed at the ominous aspect of the heavens.

"There'll be the cats to pay to-morrow," he observed to Deadwood Dick. "We've now been blown wide of our course, and to-morrow we are likely to encounter a gale that will cost us a deal of trouble, and carry us into waters I do not like, because they're off the regular line of travel."

"But do you not anticipate a change of weather?"

"Hardly, for some days yet!" was the reply. "By the way, you and the master do not seem to get along very smoothly."

"The master? Who is he?" Dick asked.

"Why, I mean Mr. Fairfax, of course."

"I don't know any man to be my master, captain. I am simply an employee, and if I may speak honestly, a poorly-treated one at that."

"I should say so. My opinion of Fairfax is not what it was when I first met him. Take it altogether, I am not particularly glad I hired for this trip. Since I first was approached by Fairfax his demeanor has undergone a great change."

"Yes, it has. I do not know whether it is owing to pride, or to undue influence."

"The latter, I judge. Sir Rupert Ralston, I am told, is now poor, but expects to slip into a dead man's shoes before long. In which event he will be worth a good many thousand pounds. That is why Fairfax wants to marry his sister off to him, I imagine."

"Very likely. And because Miss Falka does not fancy Sir Rupert, Felix vents his spite on me, eh? Well, let him! It don't hurt me much. When we touch Honolulu—but never mind. I will not say what I was going to."

"That is not necessary," the captain replied, "for I should not blame you if you did leave your present employ. I have heard enough said to believe that I will be called upon to put you under arrest before the voyage is over. If such is the case, Bristol, I trust you will not become my enemy, for even if I have to arrest you, I will, so far as lies in my power, be your friend, for sincerely I like your ways and your pluck."

"Thank you!" Dick replied. "I certainly appreciate your proffered friendship more than I can find words to express. That there is trouble ahead no doubt is true. But I shall meet it with the same composure I meet all such

things. Even though death stare me in the face it will not be the first time!"

"Bravely spoken!" the captain said, admiringly. "I see there's no end to your grit. By the way, you must excuse me now, but before you leave me, here is something that was given to me to give to you. You needn't say anything about it, you know."

And drawing a sealed envelope from his pocket, the good skipper gave it to Dick, and then turned away.

Soon after, Dick went below, and there examined the missive, which, as he had surmised, was from Falka Fairfax.

It read:

"They are treating me very badly. I am now really kept locked up in my state-room, and brother Felix has threatened to put me on an allowance of bread and water unless I agree to never speak to you again. That I'll not do. I don't consider my brother has any right to dictate to me, and he will find out that he can't make me a slave to his wishes."

"I wish you could arrange it so we could escape from the yacht at Honolulu, for if you especially don't escape, I fear for your life. Look out for Sir Rupert and Peabody, for both are now your bitter enemies and mean you deadly harm."

Instead of destroying this communication, as he ought to have done, Dick put it away in his pocket.

He did not know whether to feel vexed or pleased over what was literally Falka's avowal of preference for him.

He knew that their stations in life were wide apart, and had never allowed himself to think for an instant that either could be anything to the other except friends.

Now, however, the possibilities were widely different, although Dick could not have said in truth that he was elated over the fact.

Nevertheless, his mind was made up to one thing.

If he left the yacht on its arrival at Honolulu, and Falka wanted to accompany him, he should endeavor to see that her wish was gratified.

Although he had been warned by no less than three persons to look out for trouble, Dick did not feel that he was in immediate danger of losing his life. If molested at all, he believed it would not be more than to make him a prisoner.

That day, just at dusk, Felix Fairfax came on deck, and he and Captain Brown seemed to engage in an animated discussion, during which the old skipper several times pointed toward the threatening sky, and shook his head, dubiously.

While the two were conversing, Professor Peabody also came on deck, and called the baronet aside, at the same time giving him a piece of paper.

What was written upon it, Dick of course had no means of knowing, but he saw that Felix at once became greatly excited, and shook his clinched fist in the air, at the same time giving the young American a most malignant glance.

"I wonder what the deuce is to pay, now?" mused Dick. "Felix seems greatly excited, and it would appear that I am the object of his wrath. I wonder if Peabody has not been putting up a job on me? By Jove! if I thought he had, I'd lick him within an inch of his life."

If the note had any bearing on Dick, he had no immediate appraisal of the fact, for Felix and Peabody soon went below.

About an hour later, however, Captain Brown, and three sailors approached the detective.

"Bristol!" the captain said, respectfully, "I have received peremptory orders to put you under arrest. I hope it will not be necessary for us to resort to force!"

"No, captain; for your sake, I will not make any resistance!" Dick replied. "I would like to know, however, what is the charge on which I am arrested?"

"I will have to refer you to Fairfax, for your answer. My orders are to arrest you, secure your hands and feet, and bind you to the mast, until quarters have been prepared for you, in the hold. I am sorry to have to do this, my boy, but those are my orders, and I am under contract to do Fairfax's biddings."

"Oh, I understand that, sir, and shall attach no blame to you," Dick declared, with all candor. "So go ahead, and obey orders!" and he permitted the sailors to bind his hands and feet; then he was securely lashed to the mainmast.

"I'll have the boys hurry up and fix you up a place below!" the captain said, "so that you will be more comfortable. I wouldn't treat a dog as Mr. Felix is treating you."

"Oh, I can stand it, and I'll get even with the English cur, yet!" Dick assured. "By the way, captain, how far are we from Honolulu?"

"A good ways," Brown had to admit. "We

have passed the Sandwich group further off to our right than I would like to say. For the last two days, the fearful winds have handled us pretty much as they please, though I have kept Fairfax unaware of the fact. If my prognostications are not badly wrong, there will be a terrific time, and we are liable to go ashore on one of the many uncharted islands in these regions!"

"But you have your compass. Can't you get your bearing by that?"

The captain shook his forefinger, warningly. "'Sh!" he said, mysteriously. "Can you keep a secret?"

"Certainly. Go on!"

The captain then bent forward, and whispered, in Dick's ear:

"The compass and log-book mysteriously disappeared, the first day of rough weather. Since then, it has been all guess-work!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CALAMITY THAT CAME.

No words can adequately express the surprise of Deadwood Dick, at the statement of Captain Brown, regarding the loss of the compass and log-book.

What questions his surprise might have led him to make were cut short by the captain turning away, followed by the sailors.

"By Jove! this beats the mischief!" Dick muttered, "and but confirms my foreboding of trouble. With stormy weather, and heavier weather prophesied, and the compass gone, the Ariel has gone wide of her course, and is going to who knows where? The prospect is mighty slim, especially for me. Being a prisoner, if the yacht goes down, why, naturally, I'll have a fine prospect of going down with her."

"The compass and log-book mysteriously disappeared, the first day of the storm, Brown says. Now, I wonder *how* it disappeared, and where to? Of course Brown had nothing to do with its loss, for that is equal to the loss of his vessel, in one sense. It stands to reason, then that the compass and log-book were *stolen* by some one, who has a desire to have the yacht wrecked, and the lives of all on board lost, or, at least, the voyage brought to an end, and the search for Weird Island terminated."

"According to what Felix told me, outlawed Francis Fairfax would be the man in whom such a desire would be strongest. Does it go to show, then, that the compass was stolen by Francis, or his agent? If so, one or the other, or both, must be on board."

But, who was to be suspected?

That was a question, which Felix, in all probability, could not have answered any easier than the detective.

Dick had carefully studied every man on board, particularly Black Breck and Professor Pythagoras Peabody.

Breck he had at once decided was a suspicious character from the fact that Dick believed the shock of black hair and tremendous raven beard both to be false; but observation had failed to satisfy him that it was a disguise.

It was plain that Peabody was not a "made-up" man, for his straggling side-whiskers could be seen to sprout from the flesh; and again, he did not in the slightest resemble the Fairfax family. If he was Francis, Felix would certainly have identified him.

But, might he not be the death-planning agent of Francis?

Or, might not Black Breck be likewise?

Or, might not the two be in connivance, with Francis in the background?

These and similar questions crowded themselves rapidly upon Dick's mind, as he stood in the raw wind and drizzling rain, lashed to the mast, but they gave him no satisfaction.

"Peabody is a villain. I am satisfied of that," he reflected, "and he had an object in accompanying young Fairfax. Either the object is revengeful or mercenary. If the former, he is an agent of Francis, and he don't mean that Felix or Falka shall ever return to England. Here comes Felix now. If he hadn't treated me so shabbily, I might be able to put him on his guard. As it is, I shall wait."

Felix came sauntering up, an insolent expression upon his face, and a gleam in his eyes that boded Deadwood Dick no good.

"Well, sir, do you think it pays to betray a friend's confidence?" he asked.

"Indeed it does not, as you and the scoundrel who prompts you will find out," was Dick's sharp rejoinder.

"Do you mean to call me a scoundrel?" Felix demanded, flushing with rage.

"I believed you to be an honorable man when I hired out to you, but you have proven your-

self right the opposite. I have no further wish to associate with such a chump as you."

"You insolent cur, I've a mind to brain you! How dare you address me thus?"

"Because I am a man. I don't fear you. Free my hands, and I'll guarantee to do you up brown in a jiffy."

"You'll not get that opportunity, you ruffian! You're my prisoner, and such you shall remain until we reach Honolulu, when I shall have you locked up and held to wait my charges against you."

"Ah, indeed," Dick retorted, blandly. "As this yacht will never see Honolulu, the delectable pleasure of seeing me locked up there never will be yours."

"What do you mean?" demanded the Briton, in undisguised alarm.

"Just what I say: the Ariel will never strike shore again. She is a doomed craft."

Felix turned pale.

"What do you mean?" he repeated. "Explain yourself."

"It don't matter. Since you have put me in this position I have made a discovery that warrants me in saying what I have. I know not why I am arrested, nor do I now care particularly, for you have, by your idiotic and overbearing actions, forfeited all my confidence, and if the Ariel goes to the bottom we'll all go down together."

Felix now became deathly white.

"For Heaven's sake, man, what do you mean?" he gasped. "What have you found out? I demand to know!"

"Bah! a fig for what you demand," retorted Dick. "Without provocation, you made an ass of yourself, and that settles it so far as I am concerned. You and I are quits!"

"Ah! are we? We'll see about that. I had you arrested for good cause, sir. You are an impudent, low-bred adventurer and fortune-hunter; you sought to put disgrace upon my family name and honor, by alienating the affections of my sister from her betrothed."

"You're a silly dolt and a liar!" Dick cried, fiercely, "and if I were free I'd choke those words back down your throat!"

"But you're not free!" sneered Fairfax, "and you'll get ten lashes for every time you insult me, you wretch. It is you who lies when you say you have not been trying to alienate my sister's affections. Even after I forbade you from speaking to her, and shut her up so you should not see her, you have further sought to incur my enmity by carrying on a clandestine correspondence with her. So I have done right in arresting you. I would be justified in killing you, and have done with it."

"Your last charge is the most infamous lie of all!" Dick cried. "I have not seen Miss Falka since the night of our late encounter, nor have I in any way, personally or otherwise, communicated with her. So you are laboring under a jealous delusion, or else you are out of your head, I don't know which."

"Neither, sir. Denial from you is absolutely useless, when I possess proof of your treachery!"

"Proof! What proof?"

"One of the messages you sent to my sister. It was found protruding from under the bottom of her door, and brought to me."

"By that pilgarlic, Peabody?"

"Yes."

"I thought so. He is a snake, as I suspected from the first, and if you received such a missive as you have referred to, Pilgarlic Peabody is the author of it."

"A very likely story," Felix sneered. "Professor Peabody is a gentleman of high birth, and the uncle, guardian, and next of kin of Sir Rupert Ralston, who is to be my sister's husband. No, sir, the professor could have no object in misleading me or injuring you."

"If you have the letter you speak of I should like to see it!" Dick said.

"I will read it to you," the Englishman replied, drawing a sheet of note-paper from his pocket. "Here it is; listen:

"DARLING FALKA:—

"I am making all possible preparations for our escape from the Ariel, as soon as we anchor at Honolulu. Be in readiness to accompany me, and I will get you safely ashore, if I have to wade through blood to do it. Once we are ashore, we will be married, and can snap our fingers at your thick-headed brother."

"Yours, until death,

"DICK."

"There!" Felix ejaculated, sneeringly, "now, isn't that a nice letter for a plebeian lout like you to write to my sister?"

"I did not write it," Dick replied, "and you are both a fool and a liar if you say I did."

Hitherto I have not entertained a thought of winning Miss Falka's favor, but, now, after what has happened, if it would be a thorn in your side, I shall do my best to alienate her affections from you, as you characterize it, and cause her to regard you as the vilest worm that crawls upon the earth. But, hold! I had forgotten!

"The Ariel is doomed, and all on board, except Falka, myself, and one other. The hand of Francis Fairfax has sealed your fate, and that of your two cronies. Go, unworthy Englishman! I would not bandy further words with you. You're not a man!"

Safe to say that Felix was too astonished at the "nerve" of the American, for further answer, and glaring at him for a moment, he went away.

As night settled down, the storm grew more violent, and the yacht became nearly unmanagable, requiring the strenuous efforts of the crew and captain to keep her from swamping, as the heavy seas broke over and submerged her deck.

As may be imagined, the position of the prisoner was everything but comfortable. Lashed to the mast, and scarcely able to move a muscle, he was drenched to the skin and the sharp wind pierced him like a knife.

It was an awful moment, the roaring of the storm, the livid flashes of lightning, the creaking of masts and machinery, and the stentorian yells of the men serving to make night hideous.

Suddenly a cry rung out, high above the din: "To the pumps! to the pumps! the ship is scuttled and sinking!"

Almost at the same minute, Dick felt the bonds drop off of him, as by magic, and a voice cried in his ear:

"Quick! to the cabin! Seize Falka and jump overboard! We're almost upon an island!"

The voice was that of Black Breck!

Not pausing to consider whether the order was for the best or no, Dick bounded toward the cabin stairs, bent on rescuing the girl who had caused him so much trouble.

But, he was not destined to accomplish his object.

A great mountain of sea swept down over the Ariel's deck, and gathering up the detective as though he were but a straw, swept him overboard!

He was conscious of being buffeted about on the crest of the mad waves, for a few seconds; then his head came in contact with something hard and his senses forsook him!

CHAPTER IX.

ON AN UNKNOWN ISLAND.

WHEN Dick Bristol awoke to full consciousness, he was no longer a tempest-tossed waif of the sea, but high and dry upon *terra firma*, lying flat upon his back, with his face upturned to the sun.

With an effort, he sat up, and gazed about him in wonderment.

Before him was a narrow stretch of silvery beach, and beyond that the great ocean, whose waves danced merrily in the warm sunlight.

Behind him, an I to the right and left, was a dense expanse of semi-tropical woodland, some of the trees growing to an immense height, while others were short, flowering, fruitful, and intermatted with a wilderness of vines.

Gaze as far out to sea as he might, no sign of other land, or of sail was to be seen.

Having made these few quick observations of his surroundings, Dick turned his attention to himself.

He soon succeeded in getting upon his feet, and found that, although he was a little stiff his limbs were uninjured.

Upon the back of his head was a contused scalp-wound, but it was not of enough account to alarm him.

"I wonder what became of the Ariel?" he mused as he started down to the hard sandy beach, and sauntered along it. "If she was scuttled, she probably sunk. Then, again, she may have been wrecked upon this very island, for when Black Breck shouted for me to get Falka, and jump overboard, he said we were almost upon an island. Jove! I must make a search of the beach, anyhow!"

He set out for a walk, around the island, having but little idea of its dimension. The silvery beach of sand and pebbles was not more than twenty feet wide, at any point, and was met on one side by the lapping waters of the ocean, and on the other by the dense, weird, semi-tropical forest of the island, into whose dark labyrinth no sunlight appeared to penetrate.

While following the winding course of the

beach, he kept an anxious watch, seaward, but nothing like a sail greeted his vision.

For what seemed hours to him, he tramped on, but there was no variance in the monotony of the scene. The ocean looked just the same, the narrow strip of beach wound on; there was no change in the appearance of the weird, somber forest.

"I'll be hanged if I ain't tired!" the island tramp said, finally pausing. "I'm about played out. If I only had a good square meal, I should feel all hunki-dori! Perhaps I'll find it, somewhere."

So mustering up fresh courage, he toiled on.

He had traversed about a mile more of the sand strip, when his eyes espied something that caused his heart to give a leap.

It was a tin can, such as is used for preserving oysters.

Was it full, or empty?

A few quick strides brought him to the object of his discovery, and he snatched it up, eagerly.

Aha! Eureka! his dearest hopes were realized!

The can had not been opened!

Moreover, he recognized it as one of the same brand as those with which the larder of the Ariel had been stocked.

It is unnecessary to say that the adventurer did not proceed further just then on his tramp of exploration.

He sat down beneath the shade of a tree at the edge of the forest, and with his good knife soon had the can open, to find a repast of luscious fat bivalves at his command. These he devoured with the gusto of a half-famished man.

Not until they were all consumed did he stay his feast.

He now felt immeasurably refreshed, and concluded to go on at least until sunset.

So he kept on some two miles further, when, to his great joy, he made another discovery.

This time it was of far more significance than a mere can of oysters.

Far ahead, in the lessening sunlight, lay the hulk of a stranded vessel, two-thirds of it driven high and dry upon the beach.

The masts and entire rigging were gone, and only the body of the craft remained.

"The Ariel, I'll wager!" Dick decided, hurrying forward. "Perhaps I will find some one alive."

He pressed on with increasing eagerness, but soon found that the wreck was further away than it at first seemed, and it was twilight ere he reached it.

Not a sign of life was visible.

The beach was strewn plentifully with the debris of the yacht, for the Ariel it really was; but no bodies had been washed ashore—no sign of life was apparent.

It was not without feelings of awe and apprehension that Dick clambered aboard to make a search of the wreck, for he naturally expected to find one or more dead persons on her decks or in the cabins.

The water had played havoc with everything below deck except the captain's quarters in midship, the storage hold, the forecastle and the engine-room.

The after cabin had been rendered unfit for occupancy, and the stern was too much submerged to explore.

Dick found but one corpse, and that lay at the foot of the main-cabin companionway.

The body was that of Sir Rupert Ralston, whose throat was cut from ear to ear!

The state-rooms occupied by Felix Fairfax and Peabody, as well as by Falka, were not only empty, but in a terrible state of disorder and ruin.

"It must be that all on board escaped from the vessel, even if it was to drown—all except Sir Rupert," Dick mused. "From indications, he was foully murdered, and I need no one to tell me who was his assassin. I see now why Professor Peabody was a passenger on the Ariel. Felix told me that Peabody was an uncle, the guardian, and next of kin of Sir Rupert. According to Black Breck, Sir Rupert was soon to come into possession of a handsome fortune. If he were to die, in all probability the fortune would descend to Peabody; hence it is but natural that Peabody should covet the fortune, and mayhap not only that but also Sir Rupert's intended bride, poor Falka! Yes, yes; that's the whole long and short of it. Peabody murdered Sir Rupert. The question now is, who scuttled the Ariel—Black Breck or Peabody? Blamed if I'm not inclined to believe it was the latter, for the boat certainly was scuttled at or near the stern!"

Thus musing, Dick continued his inspection of

the wreck, leaving the burial of Sir Rupert to be attended to on the morrow.

In the engine room he found that little or no damage had occurred, and the engines were evidently in good working order, except that the smokestacks had been swept overboard.

Everything in the storage-hold was in good condition.

There was a plentiful supply of salt and dried meats, canned goods, coffee, hard-tack, tobacco and wines, and there was also oil, coal, tools and general repairing appliances, and other supplies too numerous to mention.

As the captain's quarters were comfortably fitted up, Dick concluded to there take up his abode, until such a time as he might be able to get away from the island.

"It ain't so bad as it might be, by a long shot!" he observed, as he busied himself in putting things to rights. "I won't starve, for awhile, that is certain, and the principal thing lacking will be human companionship. If some goodly-disposed Friday only would happen along, as in the case of the elder Crusoe, I'd be fixed to a nicety!"

CHAPTER X.

DICK AS ROBINSON CRUSOE, JR.

BEING very much fatigued, the lone man on the lone island retired early, and after a refreshing sleep, was early astir, the next morning.

The sun came up warm and bright, and a breeze laden with the exquisite perfume of tropical fruits and flowers, wafted down from the weird forest.

After a sea-bath and a hearty breakfast of fried ham and coffee, Dick set to work with such tools and lumber as he could find, and fashioned a creditable coffin, in which to inclose the remains of Sir Rupert Ralston.

He then lowered the coffin to the beach, and dragged it into the edge of the forest, where he dug a grave and placed the coffin in it. Then he bore the body to the coffin, placed the dead knight in it, and soon the burial was complete.

This done, he returned to the bulk, and among other things erected two upright poles on the boat's bow, and nailed to them a big strip of canvas, upon which, with the aid of paint and brush, he lettered the following:

TAKE NOTICE!

THIS IS THE ABOLE OF

ROBINSON CRUSOE, JR.

BEWARE OF DYNAMITE AND THE HOWITZER!

APPROACH AT YOUR PERIL!

"I reckon that will scare away any one who may come prowling around!" he said, "except they be natives. If they come bothering me, there's the howitzer and plenty of powder and shot in the hold to receive them with."

The forenoon was occupied in making such preparations about the wreck as he thought necessary for comfort and convenience during his probably long stay on the island; then, appropriating the captain's fine chronometer watch which was still running, and his two good revolvers and one of the several repeating rifles which he found in the hold, the adventurous castaway set forth for a further exploration of the strange land upon which he had been tossed by the merciful waves and tide.

Keeping to the beach, he followed its curving course for upward of an hour.

Frequently he came across some portion of the Ariel's wreckage, but no bodies were found.

When about two miles from the bulk, he suddenly stopped, with an exclamation.

Before him in the sand, were the imprints of booted feet.

Examination proved that they had come from the forest down to the water's edge, and returned whence they came.

The boots which had made the footprints were of extraordinary size, and this caused Dick's heart to beat faster.

"By Jerusalem!" he ejaculated, "there's somebody else on this island, sure as preachin'! And, whoever could wear such boots except Toby? It is not likely the natives, if there are any, are accustomed to wear number seventeen cowhides! Not much! Toby Whangdoodie Green has been wrecked upon this island, sure! Here is his trail. And, such being the case, I must find him. Then, indeed, will I be Robinson Crusoe, Jr., and Toby will be my man Friday. The only thing then lacking will be the cockatoo and goat."

Looking to it that his rifle and revolvers were in good working order, the adventurous Dick set out to follow the footprints.

This was all easy enough, so far as the sandy beach was concerned, but, once the sand was left, the tracks were no longer visible.

Where they ended, however, there began a natural forest aisle, which appeared to wind back into the depths of the woodland, that here resembled a jungle, so thick were the trees and vines.

The odor of the flowers was so intense as to be fairly sickening, and thousands of birds of beautiful hue made a very pandemonium of song and discordant chatter.

As he advanced, the land began to ascend pretty sharply, and the further he went the steeper it got, and while the timber grew sparser, the spaces between was filled up with rocks.

An hour of this up-hill journey sufficed to make our young Crusoe fatigued enough to sit down.

As yet he had discovered nothing particularly startling about the island, more than that, but for the noise of the birds, it would be mighty solemn and lonesome.

While seated upon the rock pondering over the novelty of his situation, he was suddenly startled by a strange sound, coming from only a short distance away.

The sound was by no means unfamiliar. Dick had heard it several times before on board of the ill-fated Ariel.

It was the *thwank! thwank! thank-e-ty-thwank*, of a banjo!

"It's Toby, sure's I live, and I'll be blowed if he don't appear to be in uncommon good spirits, everything considered!"

Directly the following verse of song, in a peculiarly pleasing tone of voice, was wafted to the detective's ears:

"Mars'er put nigger in de co'n-fiel',
For to scare away de crows;
Long come de big hen-hawk,
An' bite off nigger's nose.
Nigger skedaddle fo' de doctor's;
Ole St. Peter settin' on de fence,
An' he say, 'Hello dar, Sambo,
Whar's you a-gwine hence?'
Done goin' to de doctor, mars'r,
Fo' a hawk hab got my nose;
Come along wid me,' said St. Peter,
'An' w'ar de heablenly clo'se.'
But nigger kep' on a-runnin',
An' dem crows dey got dot corn;
So nigger have to keep on runnin',
Till Gab'r'el toots his horn!"

"By Jove! Toby is quite an artist in his line!" Dick mused. "What would he say, I wonder, if I was to give him a little fright?"

Slinging his rifle to his back, Dick stole noiselessly in the direction from which had come the darky serenade.

The ground was liberally covered with grass, and a careful footfall was scarcely perceptible to the keenest sense of hearing.

In a few minutes Dick succeeded in gaining a position where he could see his sable friend, without being seen himself.

In a little natural clearing, Toby was seated flat upon the ground, with his back against a boulder, and the "ole banjo" in his grasp.

To all appearances, he was as much at home as though at his cabin door in the sunny South.

After watching him finger the banjo for a moment, Dick proceeded to make a roundabout circuit, so as to get behind him. This he succeeded in doing, and without discovery, he got behind the boulder against which Toby's back was leaning.

Here he waited and bided his time. Toby was fixing a snapped string, and at the same time talking to himself.

"It done beat de debbil what 'come ob Marse Dick," he said. "Las' I see'd of him, he war hitched up to dat mast, like er yaller hoss to a hitchin'-post. 'Deed, an' I reckon he went down wid de rest, all 'cept me, an' dat Black Breck who went off in de boat wid Miss Flawky. Lor' Gor'! wonder whar dis nigger would be now if he hadn't swum 'shore. Spect ole St. Peter wouldn't open de gate ef I was ter come a-knockin'!"

"Ho! hi! Wish Marse Dick war hyer, an' den I would feel all squntum. But, poor Marse Dick hab gone to de bottom ob de mighty deep, an' his speerit am habbin' a tussle wid St. Peter, fo' a free pass fru dem heablenly gates, shore!"

"Guess Marse Dick will win de pot, fo' he hab de grit of a Gordian setter, an' de grip ob a playful lobster."

"Den, dar's Miss Flawky! wonder wha' she be? Mebbe on dis berry islan'. Dat yar Black Breck, he be do debbil. He done jes' lower dat boat, put de insensical gal in it, an' gets in hisself, an' rows away, leabin' us all to drown, jes'

'though it was an ebbery day 'currence whar he come from.

"An' Lor' Gor'! not a soul dar' interfere, cause all were afeard ob Black Breck's pistol. Bet ace-high ag'in' a straight flush dis moke hadn't nuffin' to say. Oh!

"De frog he did a-wooin' go,
A courtin' up de trout,
An' a big long pike, wid a twel'-penny spike,
He clubbed him ober de snout!"

Just as Toby finished this snatch of song, Dick gave vent to an unearthly yell, and dodged down behind the rock.

With a howl of terror, Toby scrambled to his feet, and dropping his hither-to much-prized banjo, he made tracks for the other side of the clearing at two-forty speed, his hair literally standing on end.

Passing around the boulder, Dick picked up the banjo, and began to thrum upon the strings, and sing, at the top of his voice:

"Nigger in de cornfield
Settin' on a stump,
'Long come a buck sheep,
An' hit him a thump!"

The music reached Toby's ears, long before he reached the clearing, and he paused and looked around.

Then, slowly and hesitatingly he retraced his footsteps, evidently uncertain whether or not his eyes were deceiving him.

"Be dat Marse Dick in flesh an' blood, or be dat his spirit I see?" he muttered. "Say, hello, dar!" he cried, "what yo' doin' wid dat yar banjo?"

Without appearing to notice him, Dick kept on fingering the instrument.

This had the effect to bring Toby to a halt, his mind filled with tremulous uncertainty.

What was it?

Was it a living body, or a spirit?

Was it a form or a delusion?

He rubbed his eyes, to make sure that he was awake, and not dreaming.

But, no! he was awake.

He could not be deceived.

It was Deadwood Dick, natural as life!

The banjo, too, was giving forth the familiar air of "Johnny Get Your Gun," etc.

"Marse Dick, be dat you, fo' real an' true?" Toby asked, taking a step forward.

"Of course it is, you big coward!" Dick returned. "What the blazes ails you, anyhow?"

"Lor' Gor'! Marse Dick, I thought you was a speerit, I did, fo' shore! I heerd an orful groan, jes' a bit ago."

"Oh! you had the nightmare, Toby—that's all," Dick replied. "How did you get ashore?"

"Lor' Gor'! Marse Dick, 'deed an' I skeercely know. I see'd de boat was a-gwine to sink, an' I jes' jumped overboard, an' swum out fo' glory. Fu'st I know, I was on de shore, more live dan dead, as de sayin' goes. But, fo' de love ob de Lamb, how did yo' done get ashore, Marse Dick?"

"Give it up," Dick replied. "I was swept overboard, and that is all I know about it, until I woke up, and found myself on *terra firma*. Tell me about what happened on board the yacht before you jumped overboard. I overheard you saying something about Black Breck escaping with Miss Falka a bit ago."

"Yas, an' so he did. Dar was a awful time on deck, an' dis 'coon thought his time hab come fo' suah. Jes' as soon as de cry went up dat de boat was scuttled, Mars'r Felix he rushed down to de cabin, an' purty soon come up wid Miss Flawky in his arms.

"She was in a dead faint, an' Mars'r Felix put her in one ob de life-boats, an' was goin' to lower it, when Black Breck sprung forward, hustled Mars'r Felix to one side an' lowered de boat hisself, keepin' de hull ob us at bay wid his revolver. Den he lowered hisself into de boat, an' dat is de las' we see'd ob him or ob Miss Flawky!"

"What became of Mr. Fairfax and the rest?"

"Dunno nuffin' 'bout it. 'Spec's dey all went down wi' de boat, all 'cept me an' dat Peabody. We war smart enuff to jump overboard."

"Did Peabody get safely ashore?"

"Guess not. Hain't seen nuffin' ob him. Had a mighty hard time ob it myself. Come putty close to knockin' de head out ob de banjo, an' spilin' it fo'ebber."

Dick then related to the negro his discovery of the wreck of the Ariel, and other details already known to the reader.

"And now, Toby," he said, "we must settle our minds to making this isolated island our future home—at least for the present, for there is no prospect of our getting off from it for some time to come. I'll be Robinson Crusoe, of whom

you have doubtless heard, and you will be my man Friday."

"Rudder guess not, boss. Dar ain't no Friday 'bout dis nigger, nohow yo' kin fix it. Friday is an unlucky day, an' de cullud folks won't hab nuffin' to do wid it. Yo' kin call me Thursday or Saturday, or January or February, but not Friday. I don't like dat fo' shucks."

"All right. I'll only imagine you are Friday, then," Dick replied. "It's getting on toward night now, so I guess we had better make our way back to the Ariel. I don't suppose you are hungry, but I am, and can eat your share besides my own."

"Hungry?" echoed Toby, rolling his eyes in a ludicrously expressive way—"hungry! Why, Lor' Gor', Marse Dick, I could done gone an' eat an elephant!"

"Well, I'll give you a tip on one thing; you won't find the stock of food on the Ariel of elephantine proportions."

They set forth then, Toby carrying his beloved banjo under his arm.

It was sunset when they reached the stranded yacht, and Dick was glad to find everything as he had left it.

While he prepared supper, Toby, from the deck, flung out hook and line, and soon brought to deck a whopping sea-bass, and, when cleaned and broiled, Crusoe, Jr., and his man Friday had a repast that was adequate to satisfying their lively appetites.

After supper, they improvised cigarettes out of paper and tobacco, and had a social smoke and chat, after which they retired, and slept soundly, until morning.

The new day dawned clear and bright as had been its predecessor. The sun was warm, the air was balmy with a gentle breeze blowing from the ocean and a fragrant counter-current of air emanating from the forest.

The mighty expanse of water with its gentle silvery caps stretch far away to the misty horizon, upon which the lower rim of the luminous sun seemed resting; the trees of the forest gracefully nodded their boughs to the breeze; the sandy beach was alive with birds whose songs could be heard a mile away.

"I wonder if we are the only two human beings on this island?" Deadwood Dick asked, as, after a morning bath, he and Toby sat upon the taffrail of the Ariel, sunning themselves.

"I don't know, I'm suah, Marse Dick, but I tell you one thing; dar's either Ingines or niggers hyar."

"What makes you think that?"

"Ca'se I see'd barefooted tracks, up in de woods, what didn't hab no boots on!"

Dick laughed, heartily.

"Barefooted tracks, Toby? Why I never knew barefooted tracks wore boots."

"Mehbey dey don't, but jes' de same, dem tracks what I see'd didn't w'ar boots, an' I'll affidavit on it. Dey was jes' clean, cl'ar barefoot tracks, an' dey didn't smell ob nigger, neither, for I smelt of 'em. Can't fool dis moke. Dar wasn't no Sou' Car'liny toe-jam 'bout dem tracks."

"Where did you see these tracks, Toby?"

"Way up in de woods, furder dan whar I met yo'!"

"Were there many of them?"

"Yes, dar was lots. Look like as if dar had been a dance dar, or a camp-meetin'. Reckon, tho', dey don't hab camp-meetin's, dese parts. Dey don't on de Samdwich Islands, nor on de Feejy Islan's. Tole yo' what, Marse Dick, if dis war one ob dem Feejy Islan's, dem niggers would cut us up an eat us. Dey be berry partial to United States meat!"

"Especially, colored meat—good fat 'coon, like yourself, for instance!" suggested Dick.

"Yes, dat am so," Toby assented, with a grin of appreciation; "dey do like 'coon, dat am a fac', but dey also, for a change, am fond ob Yankee white meat *a la mode*. Yes, sah, dem cannibals dey am great epicures."

Toby's story of the "barefooted tracks with no boots on," set Dick to thinking.

It was possible, even probable, that the island was infested with natives.

They might be savage and warlike—they might even be cannibals.

In such an event, they were liable, in their prowlings, to discover the wreck of the Ariel, at any minute, and attack it, if only for plunder.

"If there are savages on the island," Dick decided, "we shall be discovered, and there will be war in the camp. Consequently, it behooves us to prepare for it, in advance, or ere we know it, we are likely to be carved up into steaks, roasts, and the like!"

"Yes, dat am so, Marse Dick. Yo' head am jes' as lebbel as an apple, when yo' say dat. A

pound ob prevention am worth an ounce ob cure, anytime. But, fo' de Lor', how we gwine to deffend oursel's, if de niggers do come?"

"Oh! I reckon we can give them a warm reception, providing they are not too many in number. Do you know how to shoot?"

"Guess I do, boss. I done hab won two turkeys at a shootin'-match already, hundred yards away!"

"Do you mean that you were a hundred yards away before they discovered that you had the turkeys, Toby, or did you shoot them?"

"I shot 'em, Marse Dick, true an' bones. Ef you'd seen dem yar turkeys flip-flap, after I paralyzed, you'd nebber intimate dat I was a common 'coon, what gets his chickens at night."

"Oh! certainly; I wouldn't suspect you of being such a character. But come! Let's go below and see what we can scare up in the way of defense."

In fitting out the *Ariel* for her expedition, be it said to the credit of *Felix Fairfax*, he had spared no pains or expense to have her supplied with everything that might be needed on the voyage. Not only was there plenty to eat and drink, but he had provided material for repairs, in case of accident, and weapons for defense, in case they were needed.

In the hold, among boxes and barrels, was the small brass howitzer, and plenty of powder and shot. There were four repeating-rifles besides the one Dick had already appropriated, and a good stock of cartridges.

All these were carried on deck, and arranged so as to be handy and efficient, in case of emergency.

The only trouble, now, in case of a siege, was the water supply, of which there was not a sufficient quantity to last long.

Somehow, Dick intuitively felt that trouble was not a great way off.

Just in what shape it would come, he did not know, but that it would come, he felt almost certain.

And in this belief he was not wrong. That afternoon, when below deck, he heard Toby calling:

"Marse Dick! Marse Dick! Come up hyar as quick as yo' can!"

Dick rushed on deck, feeling that a crisis was at hand.

"What is it, Toby?" he demanded.

"Look! look!" the negro pointed off down the beach, which, at this point, was discernible for a matter of three miles, and a party of half-a-dozen human beings were to be seen, running swiftly in the direction of the stranded vessel.

Whether they were white men, or savages, it was as yet impossible to determine.

"Trouble, now," Dick said, grimly. "Get your gun, and stand ready, Toby, but don't shoot until I tell you!"

CHAPTER X.

A BRUSH WITH GOGEL'S GANG.

THERE was no marine glass about the boat, and so the approaching party would have to come nearer before their character could be distinguished.

Eagerly the castaways watched, and not without some uneasiness, for the new-comers were rapidly approaching.

Suddenly Dick uttered a startled exclamation.

"Look," he cried. "The first party is pursued by another gang, who are coming into view. The first party is composed of white men, and I take it that the pursuers are savages."

"Shouldn't be s'prised if you was right, Marse Dick," Toby assented. "By golly! it's de crew of dis boat, shore's you lib. See, dat am Cap'n Brown in de lead."

"So it is, true enough. And that is Fairfax next to him. But neither Breck nor Professor Peabody is with them."

"I don't think Peabody got ashore alive, an' I'se purty shore Black Breck nor Miss Flawky did, nuther. Gwine to let dem chaps come aboard?"

"I am just considering about that," Dick replied. "Of course, I've got no particular grudge against the captain and the crew, but I'd be serving the Englishman right not to let him come aboard."

"Deed, an' yo' would, boss. He done serbed you mean as a sneakin' t'ief."

The fugitives were now within hailing distance, so, seizing a rifle, Dick stepped to the bulwarks.

The pursuing party were still far in the rear, and Dick knew a temporary delay in the fugitives' flight would not materially do them injury.

"Hello! halt there!" he cried, sternly. "What seek you here?"

"For Heaven's sake, let us come aboard," cried Captain Brown. "Do you not recognize us? We are the shipwrecked crew of the *Ariel*."

"I see you are," Dick replied, "but you see what this sign says," and he pointed to the banner he had erected the day before.

"But we are pursued by savages, and will all be massacred unless we get some place of shelter where we can protect ourselves or make a fight for life. Surely you would not keep us from coming aboard the wreck. See, the savages are rapidly coming down upon us!"

"I have no objection to you coming aboard, captain, and the same as regards the crew, but, before *Felix Fairfax* can come aboard he must be bound hand and foot. Under no other terms can he share the wreck, of which I am now the master by right of discovery and possession."

Fairfax gave a startled glance toward the rapidly nearing savages. That the tables were fairly turned upon him now by his late prisoner he very well understood. Anything that Dick might prescribe was better than the mercy of the pursuers.

The sailors summarily settled matters by seizing the *Briton*, and binding him hand and foot, he was carried to the deck.

The savages were now plainly discernible. They were short of stature, very dark skinned, with faces covered with hair not unlike that on a buffalo's hide. Their heads, in particular, had a profuse mass of this coarse hair, and out of it arose a pair of artificial wooden horns, painted a bright red.

Their faces, where not covered with hair, were striped with red, except round the eyes, where were rings of white.

They were also singularly deformed—their arms, of tremendous size, being very long, their feet remarkably small.

Except for breech-clouts, they were naked, and were armed with rifles!

Of these islanders there were about thirty, but all were not black-skinned. Two white men led in the pursuit, and one of these Dick at once recognized as Black Breck!

The other was a dwarf, but massive of trunk and limb, and evidently possessed of prodigious strength.

His face was one of the ugliest Dick had ever seen, not only in feature and ferocity of expression, but also owing to the numerous livid scars it bore.

"My suspicions are now matters of fact," Dick mused, as he surveyed the approaching assailants.

"Black Breck is *Frank Fairfax*, and we are wrecked on *Weird Island* where his father, *Falconer Fairfax*, is a prisoner. The dwarf yonder is Gogel, of whom *Falconer* spoke in his message."

Thus solving the situation, Dick ordered Captain Brown and a sailor to man the howitzer, and provided all the others with guns, and when Gogel and his gang were within challenging distance, the young American sprung upon the rail, a rifle in his grasp, and gave the order to halt.

Gogel at once conferred with Breck, and the gang came to a halt.

"Well, what do you people want?" Dick demanded. "Approach nearer at your peril!"

"This man is Gogel!" called out Black Breck. "He is king of this island and the ruler of its people. He demands your unconditional surrender."

"Does he? Tell him to go about his business," Dick retorted. "We are peacefully disposed, but shall defend our castle. If Gogel and his gang let us alone we shall not molest him, but will, as soon as we can get the yacht repaired and afloat, leave his island; but if the tropic beauty wants fight, he can have all he wants of it!"

"Gogel has not come to parley," Black Breck replied, "but proposes, if the whites surrender, that some, perhaps all, of their lives may be spared. If they refuse to surrender, they will be attacked and massacred without mercy!"

"No surrender!" cried Dick. "Let us alone for a few days, and we will leave the island. Attack us, and you will get the worst of it!"

"Surrender within five minutes, or the attack shall begin!" Breck exclaimed, doggedly. "No Americans can live on this island. We know your object in coming here, detective, but it will not be attained. Surrender, or your heads shall make footballs for the children of the island to play with!"

"We don't fear your threats, *Frank Fairfax*, murderer and diabolical brute that you are. If

an attack is made upon this vessel, I will send the howitzer's contents among you, and sweep you to the earth!"

Breck made no reply, but consulted Gogel, and, a few moments afterward, there was a wild yell from the islanders, and they made a precipitate rush for the wreck.

"Let go the howitzer, *Brown*!" yelled Dick, and the next moment the little cannon spoke in tones of thunder, and, at the same moment there was an exchange of volleys from the rifles of the attacking party and the men on the yacht.

A babel of yells and shrieks followed, and when the smoke of the howitzer and rifles lifted, a strange scene was revealed.

The gun had worked fearful havoc, for the beach was covered with dead and dying savages, and those of Gogel's party who had been lucky enough to escape uninjured, were fleeing in consternation, including Gogel and Breck.

Twelve of the savages were either dead or dying, and but one of those on the yacht had received a scratch, and his was not a disabling injury.

"Ha! ha!" Dick cried, waving his hat. "See the heathen skedaddle! I thought we'd make a circus for their amusement!"

"Yes, they will be sure to return, with reinforced members!" Captain Brown suggested, anxiously.

"I think not!" Dick replied. "If they do, they won't come before night. In the meantime, Cap, station one man on sentry duty, then at once set to work and make preparations for leaving this island. If it is possible to repair the yacht so that she will be fit for service again we'll do it. If not, why rig up some sort of a raft or craft by which going east we may run across a trading vessel or packet ship. In the meantime, leaving you in charge here, I shall, as soon as night comes, make it a point to find out just how strong the enemy is, and if possible, will find *Falconer Fairfax*! This, of course, is his prison-place and we must have him if we kill every black imp on the island!"

CHAPTER XI.

A DUBIOUS OUTLOOK.

NOTHING more of the savages, the remainder of that day.

Brown and his men carefully examined the wreck, and the place where it had been scuttled was found and repaired.

The engines and propelling arrangements were not damaged to any serious extent, and the captain expressed his belief that the bulk could be got afloat, at next high tide. With this object in view, all hands set to work with a will.

If the boat could be got afloat, she could be run by her steam power alone, and then, too, there was extra canvas and cordage in the hold, and plenty of timber on the island, to aid in re-establishing the sailing outfit.

While the crew were thus busied Dick made necessary preparations for his proposed search of Gogel's village that night.

Not only did he arm himself to exterior view, but underneath his clothing, he wore a belt to which was attached a revolver, knife, a box of matches, several rounds of cartridges, some strong cord, and a flask of whisky.

Tobias had also busied himself by bringing aboard the boat such weapons as the defunct savages had dropped when they fell before the deadly charge of the howitzer.

Toward night, *Felix Fairfax*, who had been placed in the hold, send word that he wanted to see Dick who at once answered the summons.

Bound hand and foot, the Englishman was seated upon the floor, with his back against a box.

"Well, sir, what is it?" Dick demanded, pausing before him.

"I want to humbly apologize for my unmanly treatment of you, detective, and ask your forgiveness!" *Felix* said. "Words are inadequate to express the shame I feel at my rash and foolish actions, and knowing you to be every inch a man, I hope you will bury all animosity toward me, and give me an opportunity to prove the renewed esteem I have for you!"

Dick surveyed the *Briton* a moment, in silence.

"Well, I don't know about that," he said. "You certainly proved yourself unworthy of any man's confidence. Through your bull-headedness, you've lost all you hired me to help you to win. The *Ariel* is a wreck, and your poor sister, I have but little doubt is dead. The man whose most unwelcome attentions you tried to force upon her—Sir Rupert Ralston—is also dead—murdered by the devil who wrote the lying letter pretending to be from me to *Falka*. You see you have much to answer for."

"The yacht is wrecked upon Weird Island, and, as you already know, Gogel, your brother Frank, and their savages, have already made an unsuccessful attack upon us. Next time, they may come in stronger force, and then, you know what to expect. Breck, otherwise your brother Frank, would like nothing better than to put you out of the way, in this far-away place, else he would not have shipped as a sailor on the *Ariel*!"

Felix turned deadly pale.

"Yes, you are right," he shivered. "I wonder he did not kill me at sea, if it is really Frank hidden behind the disguise of Black Breck!"

"He had a two-fold object in doing so. He wanted to wreck the whole of us on this island, so we would be at Gogel's mercy, and so end all hope of further search or pursuit. He first stole the compass and chart, so that Brown was helpless as to his bearings, then he scuttled the yacht, when he knew her to be heading directly upon this island!"

"But, I do not think my sister is dead or lost, for when Breck escaped from the ship he took Falka with him."

"It is possible he holds her a prisoner on the island, the same as he does your father. In that case, he would seem to have things pretty much his own way, for he has but to secure you; then, what would prevent him from returning to England and claiming the Fairfax estate?"

Felix groaned.

"Nothing!" he replied, "providing he patched up terms with Peabody. As Frank and I are almost counterparts in appearance—except, when he is disguised—it would not require much effort for him to usurp my place. But, for the love of God, Bristol, you would not be so revengeful as to turn me over to him!" and the young man trembled in every limb, at the appalling thought.

"Certainly not, so far as I am concerned personally. But, as you have not particularly endeared yourself to the crew, during the voyage of the *Ariel*, supposing Frank were to come forward, and guarantee the crew immunity from further molestation by Gogel and the savages, providing they turned you over to his custody? What power would I have to prevent them from doing so? They are too many in number to warrant interference, on my part, as you must see."

"Mind you, I do not anticipate such a proposition, but it is just as well you should know what to expect if worst comes to worst!"

"Oh! this is terrible, Bristol; for Heaven's sake, set me free. I can then at least have some show of protecting myself."

"You must appeal to Captain Brown and the crew. Brown owns the yacht, and is once more in command, so it is for him to say what he will do with you. I'm sorry for you, Fairfax, but as you owe much of all this catastrophe to your own perverse blindness and stupidity, you cannot expect much sympathy now."

"I know it, detective, but I implore of you to intercede for me. I am sure your influence with the captain would at least secure me my liberty!"

"Maybe—maybe not," Dick returned, doubtfully. "However, I will speak with him on the matter. I must be going, now, for, as soon as it becomes dusk, I shall make a reconnaissance to find out just how many men savages there are on this island, and, if possible, rescue your father and Miss Falka, if the latter be living. By the way, is Peabody on the island, alive?"

"Yes," Felix replied. "He was with my party until the savages gave us chase; then I suddenly missed him. Either he must have dodged into the forest, or joined Gogel's gang."

"He was not with the latter when they attacked the ship. You said something to the effect that if Francis could patch matters up with Peabody, there would be no trouble about his returning to England. What did you mean?"

"Simply that Peabody and myself are the only ones, now living, who could give positive evidence that Frank murdered his betrothed."

"Ah! I see!"

Then, Dick took his departure, leaving Felix in a frame of mind of combined rage and terror.

On deck, Dick met the captain.

"Brown," he said, "Felix wants his liberty. As you are once more in command here, I turn the matter over to you."

The veteran skipper shrugged his shoulders and shook his head, negatively.

"Let Mr. Fairfax remain where he is for the present," he said. "He's been the cause of enough trouble, already, and all the money I get for the voyage won't put the *Ariel* back in the condition she was. Besides that, the boys

wouldn't hear to his release. They look on him as a lump of bad luck—a real Jonah—and I don't know but they are pretty near right. If we ever get clear of this and touch at a trading port, I shall put the Englishman ashore, and let him shift for himself!"

So, this settled it, so far as Felix Fairfax's liberty was concerned.

CHAPTER XII.

A PLOT THAT DIDN'T WORK.

As soon as dusk had settled over land and sea, Deadwood Dick, accompanied by Toby, set forth on his tour of investigation and search.

There would be a three-quarters-full moon up soon; so they kept to the beach, following in the direction the savages had taken in their unceremonious retreat.

In half an hour's time the moon arose and flooded the island with a mellow light, and the two men found it an easy job to follow the re-treating trail.

The tide was coming in fast, however, and threatened to cover the sand, and thus obliterate the foot-marks; so the trailers were forced to hurry their walk, and at the same time keep an eye on the line of timber to their right, to prevent being surprised by an ambush or sentry.

"D'yer think we'se ebber gwine to git off'm dis islan' alive, Marse Dick?" Toby asked, as they sped along.

"I reckon so," Dick replied. "The chances are a big sight better now than yesterday."

"Dat am so. Golly! I jes' wan't to set my foot on 'Merican s'ile once mo', an' yo' can bet dis nigger nebber leab it ag'in. When I see'd dem yar screechin' cannerbul's a-comin' fo' de boat. I jes' imagined I see'd de debbil grinnin' at me 'ca'se he thought he war goin' to rake me in fo' all de worl', like yo' would a fat jack-pot; an', Marso Dick, I sw'ar I done jes' felt my ha'r turnin' gray, sixteen ha'rs to a lick!"

"Pooh! Toby, you don't mean to tell that you were afraid of *your own people*!"

"My own people! Oh, de Judgment Day, boss! Dat's a wuss insult dan stealin' a man's only shirt when it be out on de clo's-line an' de man am in bed waitin' fo' it to dry. Hope to nebber eat ag'in, ef dem niggers is any 'zemblance to de cullud folk of 'Merica!"

"No! Why, I saw a number of them that reminded me of your early ancestors!" Dick laughed. "By the way, Toby, there's a large possibility that we may get into a jamboree with these colored aristocrats, an' so, if you are afraid of them, you'd better make tracks back for the *Ariel*!"

"Me afraid ob dem nigger apes? Not much, boss! Yo' don't know me yet. I ain't no cheap-grade 'coons, an' don't yo' forgot it! I'se a red-hot stove wid fire a-blazin', when it cum to fi'tin', fo' shore. I'se jes' de moke w'at can git away wid a dozen ob dem kangaroo black-an'-tans, an' not ba'f try. Tell yo' what, boss, ef yo' want to judge perigree in de cullud people, you wanter jump fo' do blackest. Dem what is saffron collar, dey ain't jennywine straight stock, an', what's moah, dey hab de berry pronicious habit o' hankerin' arfter odder folkses hen-roosts when dar ain't no one a-watchin'. Knows dem yar class ob low-down, no-count niggers jes' like I knows a ripe watermelon. Yes, sah!"

Dick did not dispute Toby's anthropological theory, and the twain tramped on in silence.

At length they came to where the footprints entered the forest, and continued along a well-beaten path.

They had left the beach none too soon either, for at a short distance from that point, the beach was entirely submerged by the incoming tide.

By this time the moon was well up in the heavens, and so sent its rays sifting down through the forest, and by the light the two friends kept the trail without trouble.

As the trail advanced, the ground ascended more gradually than at the point where Dick had entered the forest on the previous day, and after wending their way onward for at least two hours more, Dick and Toby came to an opening in the dense woods.

It was a natural, fertile table-land, comprising maybe a square mile in area, and was bordered in its entire circumference by the forest.

The ground was under a good state of cultivation—corn, rice and tropical vegetables being the principal products.

In the center was a tiny lake of what was very likely fresh water.

Across the plain was a little village of thatched huts, not unlike those found in Feejee villages.

These huts numbered fully twenty, and stood in a semicircle, backing up against a rock ridge or ledge that rose precipitously to a height of fifty feet. In front of these huts was a narrow strip of land, evidently used as a plaza or street.

At a distance of an eighth of a mile from these huts was a much larger structure, built of poles covered with skins, and more resembling the tepees of the American Indian.

"I reckon the big one belongs to Gogel," Dick observed, as he and Toby paused at the edge of the timber. "If such is the case, it is highly probable that Frank Fairfax hangs out there when he is on the island."

"Guess dar's no need o' sputin' dat," Toby assented, "'ca'se I don't reckon dat he would bunk in wid dem common niggers, nohow. Dar don' seem to be nobody stirrin'. Sech nigs is big on de sleep."

This was so. There was no sign of life about the village; not even so much as a light was to be seen.

"Appearances are deceptive," Dick remarked. "I'll warrant if one was to go poking around the huts, he'd have no difficulty in stirring up a swarm of human hornets. For the present, our business is with the big lodge. Come!"

He led the way and they skulked along the rim of the forest, keeping well in the shadow.

"Remember," Dick cautioned, as they hurried along, "that if we are pounced upon by a sentinel or two, firearms must not be used unless absolutely necessary."

"All right, boss," Toby agreed. "'Clar' to goodness, ef one o' dem mongrel nigs gits inter my hug, I'll squeeze him till his own mammy won' reckernise him, fo' shore."

In due time they gained a position within a hundred yards of the big lodge in its rear.

The space intervening between them and the big hut, was filled with half-grown corn, over whose tops they were barely able to look.

Despite this, they were able to see that the skin of the tepee reflected a faint glow from within.

Bidding Toby remain where he was, and give a cry like that of a sea-gull in case of danger, Dick slung his rifle to his back, drew his revolver, and began to pick his way through the corn.

It was not an easy task, for the corn was sown, instead of planted, and grew so close together it required great care to advance without creating a loud rustling.

Finally, however, he reached the lodge without discovery.

There was a light within and he plainly heard the sound of voices.

After a brief reconnaissance, he found a place where was a slit in the skin large enough to permit a limited view of the interior.

There was a rude table within, and at this two men were seated, a lantern furnishing the light.

One of the men was Black Breck, alias Frank Fairfax, and the other, Dick was surprised to observe, was Professor Pythagoras Peabody!

Breck, as he leaned upon the table, was engaged in handling a revolver.

The scowl upon his face indicated his ill humor.

"Oh! bosh!" he growled, "there's no use of my bandying words with you. You know too much, and the safest thing for me to do is to blow your brains out, and have done with it!"

"But, my dear Fairfax, what could be your object in that? What would you gain by it? You argue that with Felix and myself dead there will be no proof that you murdered the woman, and you can go back to England and pass yourself off as Felix."

"Well, who's to binder that?"

"That detective, Deadwood Dick."

"Bah! a fig for him!"

"You say you have not a sufficient force to run the risk of another attack on the wreck?"

"No; Gogel is clean scared out, and so are the niggers," Breck growled, with a fierce imprecation.

"Jest so. Well, Brown will have the yacht repaired and afloat in a few days, and Felix and the whole gang will sail away. Now, Fairfax, I'm not talking for my own good, but yours. So, if you'll join hands with me, I'll bring matters to a focus, much easier and quicker than you can yourself. Will you hear me out?"

"Go on."

"Well, in the first place, it will not be possible for you to get at Felix before the boat sails, and once he gets back to England your plans of restoration to the Fairfax estate will be utterly and forever at an end."

"Oh! Felix will never get away from this island alive," Breck protested, doggedly. "I've

got a scheme that will fetch him. But, steer ahead.

"Well, my plan is this: In the morning I will make my appearance at the wreck, with the story that I have just escaped from the savages. Of course I will be taken on board, and there remain until she is ready for departure, when I will poison the detective, Felix, and Brown, and you can come aboard and assume command. We will then sail for England, and arrive there together, and no one will suspect that you are not the Felix I accompanied on his voyage. See?"

"Go on."

"On our arrival in England, I, of course, succeed to the Ralston estate, as is my right. I want my price."

"Well, what is your price?"

"Your beauteous sister's hand in marriage."

Breck burst into a loud laugh.

"You old idiot!" he exclaimed. "Do you suppose for an instant that my sister would marry an old rakkabones like you?"

"I don't suppose anything about it—I know it. I have already seen her, and represented that Felix is dead. When I asked her, should I succeed in liberating her and her father and getting them away from here, if she would become my wife, she put her hand in mine, and promised me that she would."

"Well, what else?"

"Well, you, in your proper person, would make your appearance just before the boat started—the dead alive, as it were—and all would be lovely. Of course there would be a pretense of taking old Falconer back to England, but it would be nothing more than a natural mishap for him to fall overboard, during the voyage. We could then go back to England without fear of any future trouble sprouting out of the past."

Black Breck relit his pipe, and took several long whiffs before answering.

"I don't think much of that plan. Reckon I'd be green to go back to England with you, and have you turn me over to the Scotland Yard detectives for murder, wouldn't I, now?" And the villain laughed, scornfully. "There wouldn't be no male heirs to Fairfax then—after my execution—and the whole thing would descend to Falka, and you, being her husband, would have a soft thing of it, wouldn't you? My! yes!"

"But, that won't work, Peabody. You're a right cute schemer, but I'm too old a bird to be caught with such chaff."

"England has no use for such an ingenuous individual as you. You are entirely too clever to be cantering around in the queen's domain. When I return to England, I intend to join the church, and settle down to the life of a model squire, and really, it would not be appetizing to have a man like you hovering around, reminding me of certain little indiscretions of the past—now would it?"

"No, no, Pythagoras! Our ways must separate here!"

Peabody leaped to his feet, with a yell of terror, but it was his last cry, for there was a flash, a sharp report, and, with a groan, the professor reeled and fell, his heart pierced by a bullet from Francis Fairfax's revolver.

This accomplished, the murderer bounded from the lodge, but, instead of heading for the huts, he leaped away at amazing speed toward the opposite side of the table land.

Stepping from his place of concealment, Deadwood Dick was tempted to risk a shot, but, on second thought, concluded it would not be advisable.

CHAPTER XIII.

BROTHERS MET AND BROTHERS FELL.

At the wreck of the *Ariel*, the night passed undisturbedly. All hands worked diligently, until a late hour, on the repairs, and when, at last, they were forced to quit, from sheer fatigue, they felt encouraged at the prospects of getting the craft in a seaworthy condition, within a couple of days' time.

Morning dawned, bright and warm, and after breakfast, Captain Brown set his men to work fitting up the spars and rigging, with such limited conveniences as were at hand.

As for the captain, himself, he was not in the best of spirits. He felt most anxious at the non-return of Dick and Toby, for he had looked for them to be back at least by daybreak.

But the morning steadily advanced, and still they did not put in an appearance.

About mid-forenoon, the sentry announced that a man was approaching from in the direc-

tion whence the two scouts had gone, and soon the lookout—a man named Gregg, whom the captain had appointed mate—cried:

"It's Black Breck, and he comes alone."

"I wonder what brings him here?" asked Brown.

"No good, I'll warrant," Gregg replied, "for he is plainly in league with the savages."

Breck was advancing with a rapid stride. He carried no rifle, but walked with an improvised cane.

As he neared the yacht, he raised this cane above his head, and a handkerchief was seen to be tied to the end of it.

"A flag of truce," announced Gregg. "What do you make of it, captain? Will you let him come near?"

"Yes, within speaking distance," the captain replied, at the same time ordering the crew to their rifles. "Being alone, he can't do any particular harm. Very likely he has something of importance to communicate."

Breck was allowed to come within a few yards of the vessel, and was then ordered to halt, which he did.

"Well, what do you want?" Brown sung out in no particularly gentle tones.

"I come from Gogel, the king of the savages!" was the answer. "I come to make terms, if possible, for your own sakes, before the king sends his entire force of warriors down upon you. I come to learn if it is your intention to leave Weird Island so soon as your craft is sufficiently repaired?"

"It certainly is!" Brown assured.

"You are sensible," Breck advised. "No good could come of your staying here a moment longer than is absolutely necessary, for death awaits you if you do. Gogel smarts keenly under the defeat, and has gathered his entire force of savages, numbering in all over one hundred and fifty, and is now awaiting the result of my proposed treaty with you, before pouncing down upon you. I have greater influence over him than you may suppose, and as you are men of my own race, I am here in your behalf."

"Well, sir, what treaty is it you propose?" Captain Brown demanded.

"The first clause of it is that you will leave the island just as soon as your yacht is in fit condition."

"Assented to, without parley, sir. What else?"

"The second and only other stipulation is, that you give up to me my brother, Felix Fairfax. Do this, and in the name of Gogel I will guarantee you immunity from molestation while you remain here. Refuse, and I'll guarantee there won't be a mother's son of you drawing the breath of life an hours hence. I await your decision."

There was no mistaking the business-like tenor of his tone. It was not that of a man who was bluffing—he was in dead earnest, evidently.

Brown, before replying, glanced at his men to see how the outlaw's words affected them, and was not surprised to see them conversing eagerly together, and nodding their heads in an affirmative way.

He well knew, without asking, what was the significance of the nod.

The crew were in favor of surrendering Felix. Turning to Breck, Brown responded:

"Francis Fairfax, your last demand would be an extraordinary one did I not consider from whom it came. While we are not desirous of any more trouble, during the remainder of our stay upon the island, we are human beings, and I would not deliver up a dog to be wantonly butchered, much less a man, and that man your own brother."

"You don't understand me!" Breck coolly replied. "It is not for butchery, as you call it, that Felix is wanted. We are brothers, but, likewise, are implacable enemies, and never can be bought else. The world is not large enough to hold us both; one of us must die. To that end, we must fight, and luck be with the best man. All I ask is that Felix meet me with swords and thus settle the matter. You see I come alone, so you have nothing to fear of treachery, black as I am painted. If I fall, so be it; the world will lose a bright and shining light, without missing it. If Felix falls, I am to be allowed to go free, and with these conditions, will guarantee you no further molestation during your stay upon the island. Now, sir, I ask of you, is that not fair?"

"Ay! ay!" "Ay! ay!"

Every man on the yacht shouted this assent, except Brown, who looked sorely distressed and felt so.

"You hear, Captain Brown?" Breck pursued, triumphantly. "Your men all agree that it is a

square deal. You need feel no compunctions about allowing the affair to take place, for Felix is even as good a swordsman as myself, if not better. Bring him forth, and explain matters, and I'll wager he will willingly accept the challenge!"

Brown turned reluctantly to Gregg.

"Bring the young man up!" he said. "I don't like this business a bit, and if Felix don't want to fight, he sha'n't and I'll kill the man that says different. Bring him up, I say!"

Then, turning to Breck he added:

"If your brother chooses to meet you, I can have nothing more to say. If he don't want to, I'll defend him with the last drop of blood there is in my body!"

"Suit yourself, about that. You know the terms. Felix must fight, or you all shall perish within the hour!" Breck replied, doggedly.

Felix was brought on deck. He was pale, haggard and nervous, and looked as though he had recently passed through a spell of sickness.

When acquainted with the nature of Breck's mission, however, he brightened perceptibly, a fire flashing in his eyes, that Brown had never seen there before.

"Certainly, I will meet him!" he declared, promptly, "and I will kill him, too. Tell him to come on board, and we will fight here, for I want you to see that no foul play is indulged in, by either side. There's a couple of swords in the store-room, I believe. Send for them!"

While a messenger was gone, Felix was released of his bonds; then Breck was summoned on deck—an invitation he responded to with alacrity.

He had by this time removed his wig and beard, and was seen to be almost an exact counterpart of his brother.

As they stood facing each other and their eyes met, hatred incarnate flashed from each, and the face of either man grew hard, stern and pitiless in expression, yet neither made a move toward the other.

Francis was the first to speak.

"So you have come to this far-away clime to find a grave, eh?" he said, sarcastically.

"On the contrary, I have come to put you in one!" was the cool reply.

"Ah, indeed? That is kind of you. I didn't know I was so highly appreciated. But then, it is possible you overrate your prowess."

"Not in the least. I am only too glad of the opportunity for killing you, thus to wipe out the stain your demon's doings put upon the fair old name of Fairfax!"

"Ah! you are still patriotic, I see. That's right, my boy. Always be patriotic, even if you don't have the price of a meal. On my return to Fairfax Manor, I shall always keep your memory green, even if I can't do as much for your grave."

"When you do return to Fairfax Manor!" Felix replied, significantly.

"Oh, I certainly shall go back, and, in your name, reign right royally; for when I am done with you, there will be no one to say why I shall not live like a king!"

In spite of his effort to be as calm as his detested brother, Felix bit his lip with vexation.

"One word," he said, "before we begin. Are my father and sister still alive?"

"Oh, yes; they're as snug as bugs in a rug. To satisfy his qualms about the handful of men he lost in yesterday's engagement, I have given Falka to Gogel!" Francis replied, with a smile. "She will be the island king's seventh wife. As for the old man, our revered sire, he is doing quite well, and is soon to take one of the nigger women for a life partner."

Felix uttered a fierce curse, and probably would have engaged in a hand-to-hand conflict with his brother had not, at this juncture, Gregg put in an appearance.

"Here are the tools, gents," he said, throwing the swords upon the deck. "They're a bit rusty, but I reckon they'll answer the purpose they're wanted for. What's this to be, a sham battle, or—"

"To the death!" Felix said, with intense emphasis.

"To the death!" echoed Frank.

"All right. I'll be master of ceremonies. Get yourselves in position, gents. When I say three, let her go, Gallagher! One! Get ready!"

The brothers seized their weapons and confronted each other.

There was no trace of fear on either face. Two cooler men, two men more indifferent, apparently, to the result of the issue, could not have been found.

Hatred, revenge, murder, were impressed on each face.

Captain Brown had retired aft, and stood gazing out to sea.

He had no desire to see the duel; hearing it, he could not help.

"Two!" cried Gregg.

An awful silence pervaded the deck.

Even the waves that lapped the submerged stern seemed to hush their noise.

"Three!"

No sooner spoken than the combatants stepped quickly forward, and the silence was broken by the clash of steel.

Then, for a space of five minutes, a most terrific battle ensued—a wonderfully scientific contest for the mastery.

Not a word did these foemen utter, who sought each other's life-blood, but the incessant ringing of their well-tempered blades, spoke volumes.

Five minutes continued the battle—then, a solemn silence fell on the scene.

"Captain!" Gregg said, a few seconds later, as he touched the old skipper on the shoulder, "it's all over. They are both dead, and the world's the better off for it!"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RESCUE.

THE main reason why Deadwood Dick did not fire at the fleeing figure of Black Breck, was because he was fearful of arousing the savages, but his precaution was unnecessary, for soon, loud yells announced that the pistol report had done this.

Cutting a large slit in the skin covering of the lodge, Dick darted inside, and bent over the prostrate body of the professor.

But, no services of his could benefit the stricken man. The bullet had sped to its mark with unerring accuracy, and life was already extinct.

Seeing this the adventurous Dick made his exit by the way he had entered, and betook himself hastily through the corn, to the point where he had left Toby.

He found the latter, as a matter of course, in an agitated frame of mind.

"Lor' Gor', Marse Dick, I done war orfully skeered 'bout yo', when I heerd dat rewoolver go off, 'deed I was! Says I to myself, dat's Marse Dick's spueret done gone on ets last v'yage, an' den I got to wonderin' whedder St. Peter would let you through de gate or not; an' I got worryin' 'bout how I war gwine to get back to America, an'—an'—an' 'deed, I done got all wukked up into a persperfusion!" and Toby wiped great beads of perspiration from his forehead.

"Do you good to sweat," Dick replied. "Work a little of the lamp-black out of you. Come! follow me!"

"Whar's you done a-gwine, boss?"

"None of your business. Come along, and see. If a nigger tries to stop you, kill him!" was enjoined in most peremptory tones.

Dick then led the way, once more. His object was to visit the huts while the natives, or bigger share of them, were congregated at the big lodge.

Skirting the edge of the forest, they hurried along, and soon reached the beginning of the rocky ridge, below which the huts were built.

In the direction of the big lodge there was a great hubbub of voices, and the flashing of torches, and it was evident that great excitement prevailed over the finding of Peabody's corpse.

After a little reconnaissance, Dick became satisfied that the mud huts were, without exception, deserted. So, leaving Toby in the shadow of one of them, to give the alarm, in case of the return of the natives, the young American drew his revolver, and proceeded to visit each lodge, one after another.

Each den, for they were little else, was destitute of light, but an ignited match sufficed, in each instance, to give the detective sufficient light to take a cursory glance around the interior.

The seventh hut Dick entered, furnished a surprise, for lying upon a couch of furry skins, Dick found no less a personage than Gogel!

He was evidently in bad luck, for both arms were in slings, and his right leg was bandaged to the thigh.

At sight of the American he uttered a savage oath.

"What brings you here, you cursed Yank?" he demanded hoarsely.

For answer, Dick lit a grease-dip, that sat on a block, and covered the dwarf with his revolver.

"I'm here to kill you!" he said, "unless you come to my terms!"

"What do you mean? Why should I make terms with you, you Yankee dog?"

"For the simple reason that, if you don't, I'll blow your brains out!" Dick assured, grimly.

"What do you want?"

"You have two prisoners—an old man, and a young lady!"

"Well, what of it?"

"I want them. I have come to their rescue, and am going to take them away on the ship that's wrecked on the beach!"

"Oh! are you?"

"Certainly."

"Well, I guess not. You can't have them!"

"Then, you are a dead man!" Dick cried, exchanging his revolver to his left hand, and drawing his knife with the right. "I mean business, Gogel. I want those prisoners, or your life. Which shall it be?"

"You dare not kill me!" the hideous dwarf replied, doggedly. "Black Breck will be back with the natives, and they will cut you up into mincemeat!"

"No fear of that. I have a sentinel, outside, and he will give me warning, when the niggers start to return from the big lodge. Besides, Black Breck won't be with them!"

"Why not?"

"Good reason. He's dead!" Gogel began to look dubious, at this.

"Who killed him?" he demanded.

"Oh! that don't matter. Come! I want an answer. Will you surrender the prisoners, or not? If you don't, I'll kill you, sure's my name is Deadwood Dick!"

Gogel hesitated a moment.

"Will you promise to let me alone if I give them up?" he asked.

"Certainly."

"Well, then, you can have 'em. If Breck is dead, I don't suppose I'll ever get any more money out of 'em, so I won't be bothered with 'em!"

"You are sensible. Where am I to find them?"

For answer, Gogel nodded to a skin curtain that covered a portion of the rock which constituted the rear wall of the hut.

"Pull that aside," he directed, "and you will find a grated door. The key to it is here, under my head!"

Fearing, every moment, that the savages might return and surprise him, Dick lost no time in following the directions.

The key was found, the curtain pulled aside, and an iron grated door hinged to the solid rock, was revealed.

To unlock this, was but the work of moment, and flinging it open, Dick found a dark passage yawning before him.

He did not venture to enter, for fear that Gogel might be shamming, and lock him in; so, raising his voice, he called out:

"Falka! Falka!"

"Who is it?" was the response.

"It is I—Deadwood Dick!" the detective replied. "I have come to your rescue!"

Then followed the sound of rapid footsteps, and, a moment later Falka rushed from the passage, and threw her arms around the detective's neck.

"Oh! Dick—Mr. Bristol, is it really you?" she cried. "Oh! how glad I am! I supposed you were dead!"

"Not quite!" Dick assured. "In fact I consider myself considerably better off than several who are still alive."

"Where are that awful Gogel and Black Breck?"

"Gogel is here, all broke up. I don't know about the other scoundrel. But, this is no place for discussion. We must escape while there is yet time. Is your father in there?"

"Yes, yes. Wait, and I will bring him! God be praised that he is once more to have his liberty!"

She darted away, but directly returned, leading a feeble, decrepit old man, with stooped shoulders, and long hair and beard that were snowy white.

This wreck of a former hardy manhood, Falka introduced to Dick as her long-lost father, Falconer Fairfax.

Then, without delay, the party left the hut.

Falconer was very weak, and had to be assisted to walk, but bethinking himself of his flask of whisky, Dick quickly produced it, and induced both the baronet and Falka to partake. The result was both felt renewed strength and vitality, and in due time they reached the place where Toby was faithfully doing sentry duty.

Needless to say that Toby was overjoyed at "Miss Flawky's" release, as he no doubt considered that he had distinguished himself nearly as much in the rescue, as had Deadwood Dick.

Once the cover of the forest was gained, the friends felt a sense of security, and Dick laid their course in such a way, that, even if pursuit were given, the savages would not be likely to find them.

The route thus chosen was somewhat longer than it would otherwise have been, but Dick considered it the safest, inasmuch as they were required to stop every little way, to give the old gentleman an opportunity to rest.

Their progress, therefore, was slow, and when morning dawned, they were still a considerable distance from the wreck.

It was high noon, when the party emerged from the forest, upon the beach, just in front of the stranded yacht.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

As may be supposed, the tragic end of the careers of the brothers was a sad blow to both Falka and her father.

After due consultation, it was decided to bury the remains upon the island, and this was accordingly done, and two plainly-lettered boards now mark the resting-place of the brothers Fairfax.

They lie only a few yards from Sir Rupert Ralston's grave.

The return of Deadwood Dick gave the crew fresh courage to work, and, in less than a week, the Ariel was ready for a continuation, having been pumped dry and floated at high tide, and anchored beyond the bar.

Here she lay for a couple of days longer, while a stock of tropical fruit was taken on board.

In the mean time, such money as had been found upon the persons of Felix and Frank—and it was a considerable sum—was by Sir Falconer divided equally between Deadwood Dick and Captain Brown, the baronet reserving only a few hundred dollars to defray his and Falka's expenses back to England.

Up to the hour of sailing, nothing more had been seen of Gogel and his savage band. In all probability they are still on Weird Island.

On the afternoon of sailing, when the wind was filling the sails, and the engine was beginning to work, Dick and Falka stood on deck gazing ashore. They were looking at an object that was both curious and unique.

Two posts were firmly planted in the sand, and to them was nailed a canvas banner.

In other words, it was Dick's "Robinson Crusoe" sign.

"I wonder if we shall either of us ever see that queer sign again?" Falka asked.

"Probably not," Dick replied. "At any rate, I hope not under circumstances similar to those of the past few days."

"And I suppose when we reach San Francisco we shall see no more of you, who have been such a dear, good friend to us?"

"Very likely not, for I shall at once go northward into the mining districts, my old stamping-ground."

"Perhaps, though, we may meet again," Falka remarked, slowly. "For the present my duty is to my father, but when he passes away, as he eventually must, I may perhaps revisit your fair land, and, if so, it would be a pleasure to renew your acquaintance. By that time, however, I presume you will have forgotten that such a person as Falka Fairfax ever existed."

"Indeed, I will not," Dick replied. "I shall ever retain a pleasant remembrance, both of Miss Falka and of Tommy."

A few days later Honolulu was reached, where the Ariel was to lay up for more extensive repairs. So, bidding Brown and his crew farewell, the Fairfaxes, Dick, and Toby took the first steamer bound for 'Frisco, where they safely arrived in due time.

In 'Frisco, Dick and the English party bade each other good-by, the latter starting at once for New York.

But we must not forget one important item—Dick was also called upon to say good-by to Toby, for that gentleman of color having won the favor of old Sir Falconer, was made an offer to accompany the Fairfaxes to England, which offer he accepted, taking with him his inseparable friend, the banjo.

As for Dick, he traveled north to Denver.

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